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California AgTour Connections

UC ANR Agritourism News & Notes

January 2014

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Greetings!

Happy New Year! We hope you're enjoying the sunshine and dancing for rain.

This month we welcome Nicole Bert to the UC Small Farm Program team, and encourage those of you in Santa Barbara County to join her in promoting local farms at the Santa Barbara Fair & Expo this April. Nicole brings great experience from her work in the wine industry, as well as with many agritourism enterprises including the original Pizza Farm at Cobb Ranch in Madera.

In this issue, read about some upcoming chances to influence state and county agritourism regulations, news from the 2014 California Small Farm Conference this March in Sonoma County, and some education and funding opportunities. The number of visitors to the statewide agritourism directory, www.calagtour.org, is growing steadily; list your agritourism operation and events today.

It's been good to meet so many of you at Agritourism Intensive classes in Monterey, Ventura and Riverside Counties. We'd love to hear how it's going from those of you who participated in past classes. Please tell!

Please stay in touch and keep sharing your stories.

Sincerely,

Penny Leff, Agritourism Coordinator
UC Agriculture and Natural Resources
[Small Farm Program](#)
530-752-7779

Stories from "Agritourism Intensive"

Classes continue in Monterey, Ventura & Riverside Counties



Indio date growers, Santa Barbara ranchers, Morgan Hill fruit growers and others are planning agritourism

More than 50 farmers and ranchers from the Central Coast and Southern California have completed two of the three all-day sessions of "Agritourism Intensive" classes. Many of the class participants are seriously planning new or expanded enterprises hosting and educating the public on their land. Welcome to the agritourism community!

Many of the [handouts and presentations](#) from the classes are posted on our website for all to review.

Long-term evaluation study - please give us an update

Were you part of an "Agritourism Intensive" class in Orland, Fresno, Sacramento, Merced or San Diego during 2011 to 2013? Was it a useful experience? How are you doing with your farm, ranch or agritourism business now? Did you make any useful connections at the class? We'd love to hear a little of your story and any advice you might have for future classes. Please [click here](#) to tell us a little about how you're doing now with your agritourism or nature tourism business, or why you decided not to move forward with agritourism or nature tourism. Thanks very much!



"Discover California Farms" coming to Santa Barbara



The Mobile Agricultural Education Exhibit project, organized by the UC Small Farm Program and the California Department of Food and Agriculture's Division of Fairs and Expositions, in collaboration with local partners, will showcase local farms at the Santa Barbara Fair and Expo at the Earl Warren Showgrounds April 24 - 28.

Santa Barbara County farmers, farmers' market managers, beekeepers, vintners, olive oil purveyors, farm stand, U-Pick, agritourism and CSA

operators, nutrition educators, master gardeners and others in the local agricultural community are invited to promote themselves at and help plan this fun, interactive exhibit.

The "Discover California Farms" exhibit creates an area where Fair-goers can learn about local agriculture, get a list of local farmers' markets and farm stands, see demonstrations and meet local farmers. Additionally, Fair-goers will be able to sign up for a community sponsored agriculture program, and even taste local specialties.



There will also be hands-on activities for kids and giveaways. This one-stop area will make learning about local agriculture informative and fun!

To be part of the planning process, please attend the meeting on January 27 from 3-5 PM at the Administration Office at the Earl Warren Showgrounds, located at 3400 Calle Real in Santa Barbara. For information, contact UC Small Farm Program's new Program Representative, [Nicole Bert](#), 530-752-7779.



Nicole Bert, UC Small Farm Program

CalAgTour.org directory and event calendar - It's yours to use!



Did you know that thousands of people each month visit the UC Agricultural Tourism Directory CalAgTour.org looking for farms and ranches to visit, most of them directed there by Google searches? Will they find you? If you are a working California farmer or rancher operating an agritourism business or organizing agritourism events, we invite you to complete the [directory application](#) or the [event listing](#) form online so we can include your business and events in the directory. It's all free.

If you're already listed in the directory, please [check your listing](#) and update it if needed. You can use the directory application form for updates. We'll contact you if we have any questions.

Let's fill up that [events calendar](#)!

Legislative Hearing Thursday January 23 at UC Davis California legislators want to learn about agritourism issues & challenges

You are invited. Yolo County Assemblywoman Mariko Yamada, who chairs the Select Committee on Sustainable and Organic Agriculture, has convened a public agritourism hearing for the committee, to be held **from 2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. on January 23 in Room 1001 (Kalmanovitz Appellate Courtroom) in King Hall on the UC Davis campus.** This will be a chance for California legislators to hear about issues and challenges facing farmers and ranchers trying to establish agritourism operations, such as zoning ordinances, land use permitting and liability concerns, and to explore opportunities for state and local governments to assist farmers considering an agritourism operation.



"As more Californians become interested in locally sourced food, the desire for more interaction with growers and farmers also increases," stated Assemblymember Yamada. "Farmers are responding by seeking new and innovative ways to include attractions like corn mazes, pumpkin patches and wine tasting, but legal issues surrounding these activities remain."

Speakers include Sherman Hardesty and Penny Leff from the UC Small Farm Program, as well as a panel of producers who will discuss their own struggles. There will be time also for public comments. You are welcome to attend and participate in the public session. For more information please contact 916-319-2004.

Regulatory changes and workshop in Yuba county

- **Yuba County** is in the process of a comprehensive update to the County's zoning Ordinance & Development Code, and is holding a public hearing to discuss draft documents and to ensure that they have not forgotten any important uses or functions related to agricultural support uses and agritourism. For more information, please contact Planning Director Wendy Hartman, 530-749-5470

Meeting Date: January 23, 2014

Time: 10:30 a.m.

Location: Yuba County Agricultural Commissioner's Conference Room
915 8th Street, Suite 127, Marysville

- **Yuba County Agritourism workshop featuring Butte Co's "Unique Agricultural Overlay"**, organized By Yuba County Economic Development: **You are welcome to attend** an Agri-tourism Workshop featuring Butte County's "Unique Agricultural Overlay." Butte County's Community Development Director, Tim Snellings, will present the challenges and benefits in the process of creating the overlay in the sierra foothills. For more information, contact John L. Fleming, Economic Development Coordinator, 530.749.7560

Location: Yuba County Government Center
915 8th Street, Wheatland Room, Marysville

Date/Time: Tuesday, February 11, 2014, 3:30 p.m.

California Small Farm Conference - Register now!

Rohnert Park (Sonoma County) - March 9 to 11, 2014

Early registration (discounted price) ends January 31

Don't miss the January 31 deadline for early-bird registration for the 2014 [California Small Farm Conference](#), the state's premier gathering of small-scale farmers and ranchers, agricultural students, farmers' market managers, small-farm educators and advocates, and others involved in the small farm community. After January 31, registration prices go up to the regular rate.



Please join us March 9 - 11 at the Doubletree Hotel in Rohnert Park (Sonoma County) for the three-day educational conference, which includes day-long [field courses](#) with on-farm tours, focused [workshops](#), engaging [keynote speakers](#) and numerous networking opportunities. We'll be organizing an agritourism field course focusing on event hosting, as well as an agritourism workshop featuring experienced farm stay operators.

Get involved!



• **Calling all Food Enthusiasts!** The 2014 California Small Farm Conference [Tasting Reception](#) will be held on Monday, March 10, 2014 at the Doubletree by Hilton Hotel Wine Country. The Tasting showcases the rich culinary landscape of the Sonoma and Marin Counties. This mouthwatering event features fine wines and exceptional micro-brews paired with seasonally driven culinary delicacies. It is a fun way to network with other food lovers, farmers and food enthusiasts. This is a valuable opportunity to show off your products, network, connect with new clients and farmers' market managers from around the state and support California family farms. We invite you to be a part of this wonderful marketing and sales opportunity. Download application [here](#).



• **Donate a farm stay, tasting, tour or ... to the conference's silent auction?** Would you like to introduce new people to your agritourism operation? How about donating an overnight stay at your farm stay, a wine tasting for two, a cooking class spot, a gift basket of lavender products, a farm tour or free admission to your next event for the silent auction? The silent auction benefits the Scholarship Program. Silent auction items are displayed prominently at the Tasting Reception and during the conference. The Silent Auction is always a popular part of the conference, as well as an important funding source for the conference scholarship program. For more information, or to make a donation, please contact [Penny Leff](#), 530-752-7779.



• **Last Chance to Enter the Photo Contest** All entries for the 2014 Photo Contest are due February 1, 2014. The California Small Farm Conference tradition of a photo contest is another fun way to celebrate the beauty of California's small farms. This year's contest has four diverse categories: Best of the North Coast, Farmers' Markets and Sales, Farmer Portraits, and Visiting California Farms and Ranches. [read more...](#)

Coming Up Soon...

Conferences and educational opportunities

- **North America Farm Direct Marketing Association (NAFDMA)** invites you to their 2014 Convention - "Makin' Hey in the Heartland" - January 31 - February 5, 2014 in Kansas City. [...read more](#)



- **Oregon Small Farms Conference**
Oregon State University Campus in Corvallis at the LaSells Stewart Center and CH2M Hill Alumni Center will take place Saturday, February 22, 2014
This daylong event is geared toward farmers, agriculture professionals, food policy advocates, students and managers of farmers markets.
Twenty-four sessions will be offered on a variety of topics relevant to the Oregon small farmers. This year there will be a session track in Spanish. Speakers will include farmers, OSU Extension faculty, agribusiness, and more. [More info and registration](#)

A Few Funding Opportunities

- **The FruitGuys Community Fund** - applications due February 15, 2014 - The FruitGuys Community Fund, established in 2012 as a non-profit project of Community Initiatives, is pleased to announce funding to support sustainability projects for small to mid-size farms. Grants in the amount of \$2,500-\$5,000 will be awarded in April 2014. Preference will be given to applicants within 150 miles of San Francisco, Philadelphia, or Chicago. Projects to be considered should help farms and orchards operate more sustainably, both environmentally and economically, as well as strengthen community outreach. [More info](#)
- **USDA Value-Added Producer Grants (VAPG)** - applications due February 24, 2014 - The primary objective of the VAPG program is to help agricultural producers enter into value-added activities related to the processing and/or marketing of bio-based value-added products. Generating new products, creating and expanding marketing opportunities, and increasing producer income are the end goals of this program. You may receive priority if you are a beginning farmer or rancher, a socially-disadvantaged farmer or rancher, a small or medium-sized farm or ranch structured as a family farm, a farmer or rancher cooperative, or are proposing a mid-tier value chain, as defined in the Program Regulation. Grants are awarded on a competitive basis. [More info](#)

Thanks for reading to the bottom of the page. Please forward this newsletter to anyone you think may find it useful (Use the "forward this email" link just below), or share using the links at the top.

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