



July 2009

## California AgTour Connections Agritourism News & Notes

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### Greetings!

Welcome to the first issue of California AgTour Connections from the [UC Small Farm Program](#). We hope that you will find it a useful part of sharing and building connections for agritourism in California.

If you are busy welcoming visitors to your guest ranch or U-Pick berry-patch, promoting your farm trails association, revising your county's general plan to encourage agritourism, advising farmers how to lead farm tours safely and profitably, or involved in any part of the business of agritourism, this newsletter is for you!

I'd love to hear from you with news and suggestions for the next issue, what you think we can do to help each other, or just hear how you're doing and what you're planning.

Sincerely,  
Penny Leff, UC Small Farm Program Agritourism Coordinator

### List your business on CalAgTour.org

[Sign up now online](#)



The UC Small Farm Program hosts a searchable, [online directory](#), of California agricultural tourism operations, for use by visitors looking for a farm or ranch to visit. The directory is located at [www.CalAgTour.org](http://www.CalAgTour.org).

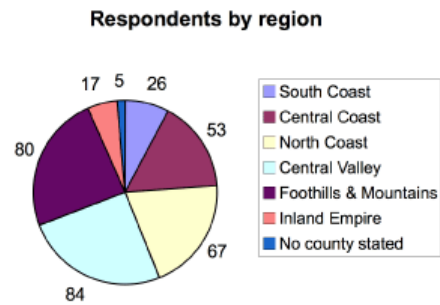
If you are a working farmer or rancher operating an agritourism business, we invite you to complete the [application online](#) so we can include your business in the directory. If you're already listed, please [check your listing](#), and update it if needed. (You can use the sign-up/application form for updates. We'll contact you if we have questions.) We are currently updating and planning new promotions for the directory and would love to include more California farms and ranches open to visitors.

### Early results from agritourism survey

Operators plan to expand or diversify

California farmers and ranchers hosted more than 2.4 million agricultural tourists in 2008, according to a survey conducted by University of California researchers.

Preliminary results from the 2009 survey, believed to be California's first statewide economic survey of agritourism operators, support the long-held notion that agritourism can be a profitable supplement to a farm or ranch business. Most agritourism operators who responded to the survey reported their agritourism businesses generated some profit. A majority said they are planning to expand or diversify their agritourism offerings over the next five years.



### Sources of income

In general, agritourism operators made more money from direct sales of agricultural products than from other activities, with an average of 45 percent of all agritourism gross income resulting from direct sales.

More than half the respondents (169) reported welcoming school field trips, with many offering classes, workshops, tours and other education, but only an average of 9 percent of agritourism income came from tours or field trips. Many operators offered land and facilities for weddings, special events, farm stays, cultural festivals and youth camps, but often did not charge fees for these activities.

### Websites, but no business plans

Almost as many operators used a website for marketing (242) as had a sign outside their business (252). Survey respondents rated websites as a very effective form of promotion, almost as effective as word of mouth or a feature story in local media. The most effective types of promotion, ranked on a scale of 1 to 5 by operators who used each type, were word of mouth (mean of 4.3), websites (mean of 4.0) and feature stories (mean of 4.0).

Only 24 percent of respondents said they have a business plan for their entire farm or ranch business. Of those who do have a business plan, 91 percent included their agritourism operation in the plan...

[Read the full article](#)

[Powerpoint presentation about early survey results](#)

## Restoring barns in Humboldt County

### Collaboration for heritage tourism



The Knight Round Barn in Loleta, built in 1896, is unlike any other structure in Humboldt County. The barn was constructed of virgin old-growth redwood, much of which remains pristine and beautiful, but it is now threatened by lack of maintenance and repairs.

A community partnership allows college students to help restore and preserve the round barn and many of the hundreds of other farming attractions that attract visitors to Humboldt County. UC Cooperative Extension farm advisor Deborah Giraud is collaborating with Bill Hole, College of the Redwoods Historical Preservation Restoration

Technology Director and with the Humboldt County Convention and Visitors Bureau in this effort.

The community college students take theory and hands-on courses to learn research, historical documentation, structural analysis, repair and rehabilitation. Then they work with owners on goals, cost projections and new activities. The visitors bureau is promoting the barns as heritage destinations, and UC Cooperative Extension is organizing the collaboration with farmers and ranchers who can not afford to maintain their historic barns. For more information, contact [Deborah Giraud](#), 707-445-7351.

## Farmstand rules relaxed for growers

AB 2168 legalizes more farm direct sales



Farmers have been selling their produce at roadside stands just about as long as there have been roads and customers to drive on them, but farm stands have changed over the last 50 years as lifestyles have changed. New rules for farm stands this year help today's farmers keep up with changing customer demands at their farm stands.

The new regulations are from Assembly Bill 2168, which became effective January 1, 2009 and created more allowances for modern farm stands throughout California.

### Jams, pickles allowed at farm stands

AB 2168 establishes a new category for farm stands that are allowed to sell processed agricultural products, such as jams, preserves, pickles, juices, cured olives and other "value-added" products made with ingredients produced on or near the farm, in addition to fresh produce and eggs grown on the farm.

### Bottled water also allowed

Farm stands are now also allowed to sell some bottled water, sodas and other non-local foods in limited quantities. These non-local, pre-packaged foods and drinks are limited to 50 square feet of selling space.


### Direct sales to chefs and organizations

With the new regulations, chefs and charitable organizations--who sell or distribute to consumers--are now also allowed to purchase product exempt from wholesale size and pack regulations at farm stands or farmers markets.

As with most regulations, these new allowances have some conditions attached. [Read the full article](#)

## Card racks replace paper maps in San Luis Obispo

Ag Adventures uses cards for cross-promotion

Printing farm trail maps every year is expensive. This year [Ag Adventures of the Central Coast](#) has developed a new approach for farmers to work together to cross-promote each other. The association will still create a farm trail  sleepy lamb

map, but it will only be available online so it can be updated quickly as new members join.

In addition to the online map, each participating farm will work directly with a professional graphic designer to create their own farm card. Each card will have a full-color promotion of the farm on one side and standard information about Ag Adventures on the back.

Each farm will receive a free-standing revolving card rack. Participants agree to display the racks, stocked with their neighbors' cards, in a prominent location at their farm stand or business. In addition, the cards can easily be used to stock racks in visitors bureaus, local hotels and resorts, expanding the visibility of Ag Adventures' members.

The same concept could be adopted by other regions. Racks come in a range of sizes, with space for 24 to 96 cards. For more information, contact [Joy Barlogio](#), president of Ag Adventures, 805-238-3799.

## Can they find you with their iPhone?

Roadside advertising in the digital world

***"Increasingly travelers are using handheld, internet accessible, GPS enabled devices, such as iPhones, BlackBerries, and Garmin GPS units, to tap into mashups (composite web applications) of 'points of interest' databases and digital maps."***

***--Adeel Ahmed***

 Adeel Ahmed

In 2008, the mobile internet had 40.4 million users, a 100 percent increase from 2006. Sixty percent of these users were 25 to 54 years old. At the recent National Extension Tourism Conference, University of Minnesota Community Economics Educator Adeel Ahmed explained how easy it is to list your own business, enhance your listing, and make sure that customers can find you, see pictures, read reviews, take a video tour, and check your website from their cars. And it's all free!

Start with Google maps, Mapquest and Bing.com/maps. Check your listing by searching as your visitors might. For example, try "farm stands, town name". If you don't see your business, you can list it on Google maps at [Google's Local Business Center](#). If your business is listed, click on it and look for a link to update the listing, which will lead you through a registration process. You can then enter a description, upload a picture, link to a video, list your website, and update your exact location. In your description, be sure to use keywords that Internet searchers are likely to use, such as "farm stand" or "vineyard wedding". Unless they are return visitors, people won't know to search for you with your farm name. Photos should be small, less than 500 kb, so they download quickly.

"Points of interest" that pop up on your GPS are based on databases operated by [Teleatlas.com](#) and [Navteq.com](#). You can make sure your business is correctly listed on these sites. You also might want to list your restaurant or food business on "[Urbanspoon](#)", which is a free iPhone application. Other exciting new tools let you take visitors on virtual trail walks or see a panoramic view of your farm. [Learn more about Ahmed's workshops.](#)

## County planning and regulations online

### UC Small Farm Program expands website

Many California counties have recently included agritourism in their planning processes or are beginning to do so now. Solano County, with participation by Suisun Valley Harvest Trails Association and other stakeholders, has created two new zoning classifications for agricultural tourism. To encourage agritourism in the region, Solano has also expanded the types of business enterprises allowed with no or simplified permitting in general agricultural zoning areas of Suisun Valley.

Mariposa County worked with an agriculture and nature tourism advisory committee to define agritourism and the levels of agritourism activities allowed by right or permitted with either a conditional or administrative use permit, depending on the type of activities, the size of the land parcel and the number of people involved.

small farm program  
logo

The Small Farm Program is gathering zoning and regulation documents related to agritourism from as many counties as possible, along with clear information about state ordinances regulating agritourism activities. Your help would be greatly appreciated. Please [send us](#) links and documents and contact people from your county. We will be posting these on the [UC Small Farm Program agritourism](#)

section of our website, as part of our ongoing updating process. Check the site soon for other useful resources, links and connections.

Thanks for reading to the bottom of the page. Please tell us if this newsletter was useful, or at least interesting, to you, and what else you would like to see.

**Sincerely,**

Penny Leff  
UC Small Farm Program  
(530) 752-7779

Email Marketing by

