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California AgTour Connections

UC ANR Agritourism News & Notes

June 2014

In This Issue

Building a Farm Trail Project

Agritourism Intensive classes

CalAgTour.org directory

San Diego farmers needed

Farm Festivals

Useful resources

Funding opportunities

Quick Links

[CalAgTour.org directory](#)

[Our Facebook page](#)

[Agritourism resources](#)

[UC Small Farm Program](#)

[USDA Funding](#)

[Newsletter archives](#)

[Join AgTour Connect listserv](#)

Greetings!

Summer's here. You're busy. Thanks for opening this newsletter

I've been learning lots the past few months about the farms, wineries, history and culture of North Yuba, the Capay Valley and the California River Delta, as I work with farmers in those regions creating farm and winery tour maps. Watch for their maps and events soon.

We're starting to plan a statewide agritourism summit for early 2015, to help encourage networking among these and the many other California agritourism associations. Please get in touch if you'd like to help plan this event. More news on this coming soon.

The UC Agritourism Directory and Calendar, www.CalAgTour.org keeps attracting more visitors. Are your farm and events included? Please join. Listing is free.

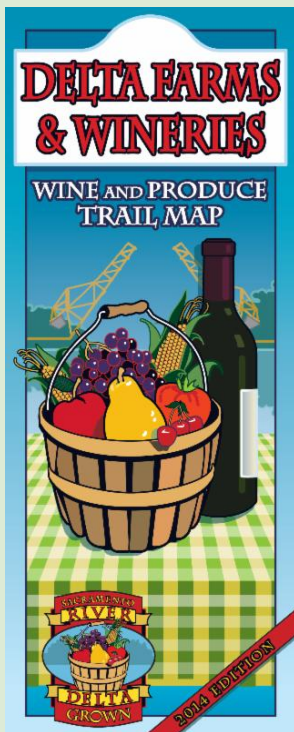
This issue also contains some tips from veteran on-farm festival organizers, and lots of links to useful resources and funding opportunities.

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

Farmers & Vintners Create Tour Maps Together



New farm tour maps - Farmers in [North Yuba](#), the [Capay Valley](#) and the [Sacramento River Delta](#) are writing stories and gathering photos to show off the special magic of the crops, artisan products, tasting rooms and farm activities of their regions to potential visitors. Each of the three agritourism associations is working with a graphic designer to create a farm visitors' map; a guide to local farm stands, U-Pick orchards, wineries, tasting rooms, classes, festivals, farm stays and tours, as well as local cultural activities, parks, lakes, resorts, campgrounds and hiking trails.

The project - The map brochures are part of the CDFA Specialty Crop Block Grant funded project, "[Building a Farm Trail; Developing effective agritourism associations to enhance rural tourism and promote specialty crops](#)". Each group will also organize a festival, open farm day, passport weekend, or other collaborative event this Summer or Fall. The UC Small Farm Program is coordinating the project, working with a team of economic development and marketing consultants to help each association build a sustainable collaborative marketing program to grow tourism in their communities.

Building a network of farm trails - The Capay Valley Farm Trail Map, the Sacramento River Delta Wine and Produce Trail Map, and the North Yuba Grown Farm and Wine Trail Map will join a family of California farm trail and wine trail maps created by groups of producers and their partners all over the state. The collaborative agritourism marketing tradition was started by the [Oak Glen Apple Growers Association](#), the [Apple Hill Growers' Association](#) and [Sonoma County Farm Trails](#) and joined by [many others](#) over the years, but there is little communication among the different regional groups.

Statewide summit in 2015 - The UC Small Farm Program, as part of the CDFA funded project, is organizing a statewide agritourism summit to be held in early 2015. The major focus of this summit will be sharing of skills and experiences among California agritourism associations. Travel assistance funds will be available to association members to attend the summit. If you have suggestions, or are interested in helping to organize this event, please contact [Penny](#), 530-752-7779.

Agritourism Intensive classes - follow-up, resources online Agritourism operations planned in Riverside, Monterey and Ventura

More than 50 of you took part in "Agritourism Intensive" classes this past winter in Riverside, Monterey or Ventura Counties to decide if agritourism was right for you, or to start planning or expanding your own agritourism activities. Many of you started great plans for operations on your farms or ranches.

If you attended the classes this year, we hope you found them useful. Please listen for a phone call in the second half of June. We'll be phoning to chat about how your plans are going and what challenges you might be facing. Thanks in



advance for answering that phone call!

Here are many of the [handouts and presentations](#) from the classes.

When's the last time you looked at www.CalAgTour.org ? It's yours to use!



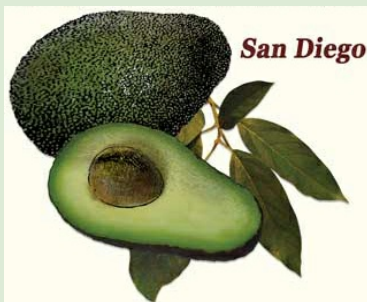
Thousands of people searched the UC Agritourism Directory & calendar last month, looking for California farms and ranches to visit.

Did they find you? It's all free!

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 to be included in the directory.

Please check [your listing](#) and update as needed. Send us your event news. (add paleff@ucdavis.edu to your email blast list) Let's fill up that [events calendar](#)!

Calling San Diego small-scale farmers! Help plan the 2015 California Small Farm Conference



The California Small Farm Conference (CSFC) will be held March 8 - 10, 2015 in San Diego. Local farmers, ranchers, educators and advocates are needed to help plan the conference.

The first Local Planning Committee meeting will be held on June 23, 2014 at the conference hotel. If you would like more information about joining the CSFC Local Planning Committee, please contact the [conference coordinator](#), Jennifer Roth

Festival on your farm? Advice from some veteran organizers

Bellydancing with your blueberries -

Usually the weekend after Labor day means ripe organic cherries and blueberries ready for picking at Riverdance Farms in Livingston, Merced County. So Cindy Lashbook and Bill Thompson have scheduled their "[Pick and Gather](#)" Festival at the farm for the past ten years on that weekend.

The Pick and Gather features fruit-picking, of course, but also has grown to include three stages for music and dancing, food and craft vendors, kid's activities, dinner and breakfast, a River Fair educational event organized by UC Merced, overnight camping in the orchard, and a PowWow coordinated by the local Native American Tribe.



Wine with your lavender - The second weekend in June is usually the height of the lavender harvest, so Charles and Linda Opper will hold their tenth annual "[Cache Creek Lavender Festival](#)" on June 7 and 8 this year at their Cache Creek Lavender Farm in Rumsey, Yolo County.



The Lavender Festival will include wine-tasting by a local winery, field talks every hour, free lavender lemonade and cookies, lavender ice cream, music for two days, a local caterer providing a light lunch, and a craft tent. The greenhouse will be open with plants for sale; clippers and rubber bands will be on hand for U-Pick fresh lavender by the bunch; and the Oppers will have 30 or so of their own lavender products for sale.

Each of these festivals expect to attract at least 2000 customers this year. Both farms

keep the admission price low to stay accessible for families, and both offer lots of activities, education and entertainment for the base admission price.

Here are some suggestions from these two experienced farm festival organizers:

- Start early. Planning is a year-round activity. Start in the fall and winter to talk with people and make arrangements. Do your sponsorship appeal early in the year. All the phone calls take more time than you might think.
- Focus on what you do best, and offer the festival at a time of year that the farm offers something you don't have to set up - such as U-Pick crops
- Do it for the psychic income - these festivals try to break even, but they sell the U-Pick and the other farm products and bring the community together.
- Try to offer something for everyone.
- Don't try to extract every last dime out of customers' pockets; offer some things free and keep it family-friendly
- Have a good volunteer organizer - a festival takes lots of help
- Partner with other community groups such as Scouts, and ask community groups to take responsibility for booths or activities
- Think about and learn about permits (Environmental Health Department & others) way ahead of time
- Check with your insurance company
- Make sure your neighbors are aware and supportive - try to involve them if you can in your festival - or at least give them free passes
- Get other organizations and vendors who are involved to list your farm as an "additional insured" on their policies
- If it's too hot, people don't come, so try to pre-sell as many tickets as possible - consider using Brown Paper Tickets or similar program
- Do lots of social media promotion
- Be prepared - Planning and producing a festival on top of regular farming takes an amazing amount of work

Charles Opper of Cache Creek Lavender would be happy to answer questions from other farmers who might be considering putting on a festival. He can be reached at lavender@cal.net.

Some useful resources...

- [Farm Based Education Network](#)
A free member network established to strengthen and support the work of educators, farmers and community leaders providing access and experiences of all kinds on productive working farms

- [Integrating Safety into Agritourism](#)

This website contains a variety of walkthroughs, based on the type of operation, to help owners identify health and safety hazards and provides resources that can be used to help fix these hazards. It's a great tool that can be used to help keep children safe when they visit farms and ranches.



- [North America Farm Direct Marketing Association](#) (NAFDMA) - a membership based trade association dedicated to providing endless peer-to-peer learning opportunities, connections and resources, for farmers who are passionate about the business of agritourism and farm direct marketing.
- [UC Small Farm Program Agritourism](#) - research reports, factsheets, handouts and presentations from workshops, articles and current projects
- [World Wide Workers on Organic Farms](#) (WWOOF US) - linking visitors with organic farmers for educational exchange

A Few Funding Opportunities

- [Farmers Market Promotion Program](#) - application due June 20, 2014, up to \$100,000 available - to assist in the development of farmers' markets, roadside stands, agritourism operations and other direct-marketing opportunities
- [Western Sustainable Agriculture Research & Education](#) (WSARE)
 - Professional Development Program Grants - grants up to \$75,000, proposals due October 2014
 - Farmer/Rancher Grants - up to \$25,000 - proposals due December 2014
 - Professional & Producer Grants - up to \$50,000 - Proposals due Dec 2014



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.

Penny Leff
UC ANR Small Farm Program
530-752-7779, paleff@ucdavis.edu