



March 2010

## California AgTour Connections Agritourism News & Notes

### In This Issue

[Small Farm Program update](#)

[Join CalAgTour.org](#)

[Spring tour sampler](#)

[Festivals flourishing](#)

[Get ready for October](#)

[Merced County organizes](#)

[Funding opportunities](#)

[Educational events](#)

[Small Farm Conference](#)

[Tourism symposium](#)

[Join Our Mailing List!](#)

### Quick Links

[Small Farm Program Agritourism Resources](#)

[Join AgTour-Connect listserv](#)

[List your agritourism operation on CalAgTour](#)

[Newsletter archives](#)

[About Us](#)

### Greetings!

I hope Springtime finds you confidently planning new adventures. This issue brings news of innovative spring tours and festivals, education and funding opportunities, tips and examples of agritourism attractions, promotions and new marketing ideas from all over California.

Here at the [UC Small Farm Program](#), we've got a lot of plans for agritourism support work, some we can turn into action now, and some that will depend on new funding.

The online agritourism directory, [www.CalAgTour.org](http://www.CalAgTour.org), is now getting a new look and new functions. Within a few weeks the site will include a calendar letting you post your own events and a new sign-up and modification form that lets you preview your listing.

We have submitted proposals for funding some new projects (in collaboration with many of you) that we hope to work on this year. We should know within a month or so about these proposals. We also hope to keep publishing this newsletter, adding useful agritourism resources to the [website](#) and building connections among everyone involved in California agritourism. Thank you for your support and encouragement. Please stay in touch and share your stories!

Sincerely,  
Penny Leff, UC Small Farm Program Agritourism Coordinator

### Small Farm Program Update Keeping going in tough times



The good news is that we're still here, and still working in partnership with UC Cooperative Extension Farm Advisors as the UC Small Farm Program.

Unfortunately, the tentative discussion with ASI that was mentioned in the January AgTour Connections newsletter did not result in a formal affiliation between the two UC programs. This means that we are now trying to figure out how to connect with the

new centralized administrative support unit in order to keep our systems and services running smoothly.

[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.)

## Spring tours blossoming all over Visitors pay for new tastes, new experiences



**Blossoms, Bees & Barnyard Babies by [Sonoma County Farm Trails](#) Sunday April 18, 2010**

A one-day event offering the public "a behind-the-scenes peek at Sonoma County's finest food and agriculture" For \$25 per vehicle or \$10 per person, visitors can

walk through orchards and fields in bloom, see newly-born animals, sample local honeys and learn the art of beekeeping, and more. 707-837-8896

**Pomegranate Honey Tours** - Alex and Jackie Lehman grow pomegranates, grapes, apples, almonds and walnuts on their 500 acre [Home Grown Cellars](#) in Madera County. They offer trolley tours of the fruit and nut trees for groups of 10 or more by appointment, and open the farm store on **Saturdays 9:00 - 4:30** for visitors to buy pure pomegranate juice, pomegranate honey (an intense flavor created by placing the bees in an isolated pomegranate orchard), pomegranate oil, soap, jelly, seed meal and more. 559-664-8599.

**Tour de Cluck: A Community Bicycle Chicken Coop Crawl** **Saturday, May 22, 2010** - Presented by the [Davis Farm to School Connection](#), offering a self-guided bike tour of urban and suburban chicken coops in the community. The tour benefits the Davis Farm to School Connection's work to support local food in the schools. More info: Jacqueline Clemens, 530-758-5005



**Visalia's Farmers Market Farm Tours** - Tours leave **once a month on Sundays**, visiting one of the vendor/farmers each time. The first tour is **Sunday March 14**, to Oak Patch Farm, growers of salad greens, sprouts and assorted pesticide-free veggies. More than 85 market customers have already signed up for the tour. [More info](#): Market Manager Paige Williams-Reng, 559-967-6722

**"Bounty of the County", San Luis Obispo** - [The Boutique Hotel Collection](#), a management company of small hotels, is offering a **Spring special, twice a week**, which combines two nights in one of

the hotels with a guided local farm tour. Guests will tour the historic Santa Margarita Ranch, sample wines at Ancient Peaks Winery, tour the caves and witness wine-making at Eberle Winery, milk a goat at Happy Acres Family Farm and see lavender oil made and taste lavender cookies and lemonade at Green Acres Lavender Farm.

**Friend's Ranch Tangerine Tours - On four Saturdays in March and April**, these [Ojai citrus growers](#) invite the public to hear a little



history of the farm and walk with the farmers through the orchard, tasting and picking fruit and asking questions. The guests arrive promptly at 9 a.m. and leave the ranch at 11:30 a.m., paying \$12 for the tour (\$5 for children 2 to 10) and \$1.50 per pound for fruit they pick or buy in the packinghouse. 805-646-2871

**Tara Firma Farms Sunday Tours** - New farmers Tara and Craig Smith offer public tours of their working-toward-becoming organic [Petaluma farm](#) every Sunday. Visitors tour the vegetable fields, meet grass-fed, pasture-raised pigs, cows and chickens, get a ride to the top of the property to enjoy views of San Francisco Bay, and then hike the 30 - 40 minutes back, ending with a stop at the farm store where they can purchase produce, chicken, beef, pork, and eggs. [More info:](#) 707-765-1202

**Mariposa Weekend in the Country - April 24 & 25, 2010**

[The Mariposa Agri-Nature Trail Association](#) invites the public to experience the diversity of California's Sierra Foothills. Twelve locations, including an alpaca ranch, a sheep ranch, 2 cattle ranches, vegetable gardens, vineyards, wineries, orchards and a family farm, open their barn doors and garden gates. Enjoy a birdwalk, nature photography workshop, children's activities and Mariposa History. More info: [JJ Gillispie](#) or Kris Casto, 209-377-8450

## Festivals flourishing

**Capay Valley Almond Festival - March 14, 2010**

Organized by the [Esparto Regional Chamber of Commerce](#), the Yolo County towns of Esparto, Capay, Brooks, Guinda and Rumsey, along scenic Highway 16, showcase the Esparto/Capay Valley Region with entertainment, crafts, good food and fun for all members of the family. **Some highlights:** The Historic Rumsey Town Hall and the Western Yolo Grange Hall in Guinda will be open with vendors, music, historical displays and a petting zoo. Capay Valley Vineyards offers wine tasting and a picnic area.



**Come hungry** - BBQ oysters, tri-tip sandwiches, cotton candy and the annual pancake breakfast all help support local organizations. [More info](#), 530-787-3242

**Kelseyville Olive Festival - March 21, 2010**

The day-long event includes a tour of the [Kelseyville Olive Mill](#) and olive orchard, education about olive history, cultivation, processing and uses. Also arts and crafts booths, olive pit-spitting contest, silent auction and a raffle. The event is free; beer and wine tasting available for a fee. Proceeds will benefit the [Lake Family Resource Center](#). [More info](#), 707-279-0483

**Apple Blossom Festival - April 17 and 18, 2010** - Organized by the [Oak Glen Apple Growers' Association](#) of San Bernardino County, this festival commemorates the sight and smell of pink and white blossoms with a quilt show, a barn dance and other special events.

## Get ready for October!

### Planning the corn maze & building the barrel car train



Paul and Denise Fantozzi are planning now so this fall they can attract more than last year's ten thousand visitors to their corn maze and pumpkin patch in the small town of Patterson. Here is what's on organic apricot farmer Paul Fantozzi's mind while March rains keep the fields muddy:

- Building a new attraction - This year it's a Barrel Car Train Ride, made from 55 gallon plastic drums, attached to carts with rubber tires, strung together and towed with an ATV. Paul estimates that it usually costs about \$10,000 to \$15,000 to bring in this kind of attraction.
- Finalizing the maze design - Every year gets a unique design. Last year's is pictured here. Paul will plant the corn after he harvests the oat hay now in the field. The maze is in the same location every year, but this year the Fantozzi's are talking about moving the pumpkins to the front field so that customers will have to walk through them to get to the maze.
- Figuring out the advertising plan. Attendance was down a little last year. This year they plan to try a little harder to bring in visitors from further away than Patterson, with 21,000 people.
- Lining up some pigs to borrow for the pig races
- Locating straw for the straw bale pyramids and other uses
- Figuring out how to enlarge the pedal tractor raceway and add a few more animals to the petting zoo.
- Getting the farm stand ready to open in June with organic olive oil and apricots

Contact Paul and Denise at [Fantozzi Farms](#), (209) 892-2015

## Country Ventures of Merced County

### New group plans audio tours, regulation changes



Farmers and ranchers are organizing to promote Merced County agriculture to Yosemite visitors as they drive through the county on Highway 140. In partnership with California Women in Agriculture, the group, [Country Ventures - Ag, Arts & Nature in Merced County](#), is creating an audio tour of 11 miles of the highway, talking about the historic ranches, wheat and cotton growing, lumber operations, flour mills and woolen mills that used to be, as well as the almond orchards, processing operations and small farms that now line the highway.

The audio tours will be given away as CDs, promoted by 4 or 5 crop identification signs along the road that will also include phone numbers, websites for more information, and will encourage visitors to stop into the local California Welcome Center or other visitors' centers to pick up tour CDs.

Country Ventures also includes at least three growers who are trying to start farm stay enterprises. They have discovered that farm stays in Merced County require conditional use permits, usually a costly undertaking. The group is participating in the Merced County general plan update process, and is specifically trying to get wording included in the Agricultural Element of the plan that would allow farm stays "by right" on working farms and ranches. (For more information about changing county agritourism regulations, see [our website](#).)

To get involved, contact [Jean Okuye](#), 209-756-2421 or UCCE Merced County Farm Advisor [Maxwell Norton](#), 209-385-7403

## New funding opportunities

### Grant proposals due soon for these programs

#### USDA Risk Management Agency: Community Outreach and Assistance Partnership Program

RMA partnerships work with educational institutions and community based organizations (including producer groups) to provide farmers and ranchers with information on new ways to manage risks to their businesses, in particular to assist minority, limited resource and traditionally under-served producers.

[Read more.](#)



#### USDA Agricultural Marketing Service: Farmers Market Promotion Program

To help communities support local food systems through direct marketing. Direct marketing includes farmers markets, **roadside stands, community-supported agriculture, and agri-tourism**. Projects that focus on increasing access to local foods by low-income residents receive special priority. [Read more.](#)

#### Western SARE: Sustainable Ag Tours Grant

These grants are targeted for producers to conduct or attend on-farm demonstrations or educational outreach tours in the area of sustainable agriculture. Applicants are eligible for up to \$2000. [Read more.](#)

## Upcoming educational events

### Two North Coast workshops not to miss



#### [Humboldt Agritourism Workshop](#)

April 2, 2010 in Eureka, CA,  
8:30 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

Sponsored by Humboldt-Del Norte Counties UCCE

Topics include: Assessing your property for its agri-tourism potential (a hands on exercise in the field), insurance concerns, permits, regional marketing,

business planning and using social media. **Featured speaker:** Darren Schmall, founder of the Pizza Farm and owner of AgPRO Consulting Services. [To Register](#), 707-445-7351

### [Lake County Local Foods Forum](#)

**March 15, 2010, 10:00 a.m. - 5:30 p.m.**

#### **Lake County Fairgrounds - Little Theater Building**

A chance for local growers and local buyers to have discussion about local food dynamics and to make connections regarding local market possibilities. All growers, buyers and Lake County residents are welcome and encouraged to attend. **Featured Speakers:**

California Secretary of Agriculture A.G. Kawamura, Chef Jenny Huston, manager of Oakland's Farm-to-Table Program, and UC Small Farm Program director Shermain Hardesty. [To register](#), 707-274-2459 **Registration is required, and there is no fee.**

## California Small Farm Conference report

February 28 - March 2 in San Diego



### **Record number of attendees**

More than 500 farmers, farm advisors, farmers' market managers, government representatives, chefs, distributors, and other hardworking people involved in small-scale farm production and marketing participated in the annual conference, enjoying great food and inspirational presentations and networking. Many of the workshop presentations are available [here](#)

### **Agritourism Short Course/Tour**

Big thank you's to these generous hosts of the **agritourism bus tour**: Tom Chino of [Chino Farms](#) and the Vegetable Shop, Mike Mellano of the [Flower Fields](#), Don McDougal of the [Grand Tradition](#) in Fallbrook, and the people of [Orfila Vineyards and Winery](#). Extra special thanks to UC Cooperative Extension San Diego Farm Advisor Ramiro Lobo for organizing and tour guiding and to UCCE San Diego Farm advisor Gary Bender for helping with logistics.

### **Agritourism workshop**

An overflowing crowd heard Devon Riley of [Rileys at Los Rios Rancho](#) explain how his father's love of playing music started the family apple farm on the path to agritourism. Devon shared some pointers for agritourism operators and explained how the [Oak Glen Apple Growers' Association](#) helps growers collaborate on promotion and events. Melissa Bautista of [Hillcrest Tree Farm](#) kept the crowd entertained with stories of how her husband's enthusiasm for trains led to Melissa's promise to do all the farming and her involvement with changing Fresno County's agritourism regulations to allow more agritourism activities "by right". Finally, we learned about business planning from Mark Oaks of the [San Diego Small Business Development Center](#).

### **Some other conference presentation highlights:**

[Facebook for farmers](#), a presentation by Brenda Dawson  
[Agricultural leases](#), from California FarmLink  
[Estate Planning for Farm and Ranch Families](#), by Patti Wooten Swanson

## Chico Cultural & Heritage Tourism Symposium

Ideas and notes from January's [symposium speakers](#)

### Some history

Did you know that Emily Post drove cross-country on the historic Lincoln Highway in 1915? (Everyone else took the train!)



California Cultural & Heritage Tourism Corps

### Highway 99 - the next Route 66 ???

Jim Conkle, enthusiastic leader of the [Route 66 Alliance](#) that has developed Route 66 and the many towns along the route into a tourist destination, is now starting the Highway 99 Alliance. To learn more about this alliance to promote the history and culture of agriculture along California's Highway 99, contact [Jim Conkle](#), 760-868-3320.

### Preview your farm tour online with "Every Trail"

If your iPhone has updated software, you can use the ["Every Trail"](#) free app to geo-tag your farm tour. Here's how: Download the app, go for a hike with the phone; it geo-tags the route, take photos, add text, and then go live and point everyone toward your trail so they can take a virtual tour of your farm or ranch or attraction.

### The new world view

The average young American is now packing 11 hours of media content daily into 7 hours, using multiple electronic visual devices.

### Some blog tips from John Gumas, [Gumas Advertising](#):

- State the purpose of the blog in the header - what's in it for them?
- Be personal and conversational in tone
- Ask questions and encourage feedback
- Consistently deliver original & relevant content
- Don't sell anything!
- Always lead with the most important "take away"
- Always provide links when mentioning other people, companies, posts, websites.
- Engage the audience with interesting polls & contests
- As soon as they are involved with you, you are the expert!

Thanks for reading and doing what you do. Please forward this newsletter to anyone who might find it useful (click on "forward email" below).

Sincerely,

Penny Leff  
UC Small Farm Program  
(530) 752-7779  
[paleff@ucdavis.edu](mailto:paleff@ucdavis.edu)

Email Marketing by

