

# California Agritourism News March 2020

News and notes for the agritourism community from UC SAREP



Greetings!

**Thank you!!** Thank you for being part of California's food system, working to keep everyone fed and healthy in the new world of COVID-19.

We know this is a hard time. Many of you have had to cancel events and activities that are normally a dependable part of your revenue. Some of you have had to cut hours or lay off or not hire workers who depend on you. Many of you are experiencing major disruptions in some of your sales channels and needing to shift tactics quickly to stay in business by extending marketing with different methods. We hope that some of the news and resources in this newsletter are helpful in this difficult time.

The UC Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education Program ([UC SAREP](#)), bringing you this newsletter, is a part of the UC Division of Agriculture and Natural Resources ([UC ANR](#)). Also part of UC ANR are all the county-based UC Cooperative Extension Advisors, university-based UC Cooperative Extension Specialists, the 4H, Master Gardener, Master Food Preserver, California Naturalist, Research Centers, IPM and Nutrition Education Programs, We all work together. We are all here to help where-ever we can.

**Please let us know, by replying to this newsletter or getting in touch with your local UCCE office, how you are being affected by the COVID-19 emergency, and how any of us might be able to best support you, now and in the future.**

## In this newsletter:

- News from here and there:
  - Sonoma County Farm Trails & others create online local food portals
  - SLO Co. Farm Trails shifts focus
  - Underwood Family Farms cancels events, starts box delivery
  - Tanaka Farms reports on changes
  - Farm Stay updates from farm stay hosts
- Resources for dealing in COVID-19 times
- Help plan Agritourism Intensive Classes in Mendocino & SLO Counties
- National Agritourism Survey Update
- Join [calagtour.org](#) directory & event calendar
- Useful agritourism resources

Thanks for all you're doing.  
Please stay in touch!

Sincerely,  
Penny Leff  
Agritourism Coordinator  
UC Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education Program

## News from here and there

### Sonoma County Farm Trails creates online portal for farm connections

Very soon after Sonoma County residents were asked to "shelter in place," the people at [Sonoma County Farm Trails](#) published an online portal to help home-bound

## CSAs: Accepting Sign-ups



LEARN MORE

people connect with local farmers.

The web portal includes CSAs accepting sign-ups, local delivery and drop-points, takeout and on-site sales, farms offering online sales and links to other community resources supporting local farms and businesses

### [Sonoma Co. Shelter in Place Food Resources portal](#)

...and a similar site shared by [Paicines Ranch: San Benito County Food Resources](#)

...and from The [San Diego Sustainable Living Institute: San Diego Farms](#)

## San Luis Obispo Farm Trail shifts focus

From [SLO Co. Farm Trail](#) leader Lynette Sonne:

Biggest focus right now is on sharing with our community what farms are open, who's delivering, offering curbside pick-ups, on-line shopping and collaborating with others to get their produce & products out to the consumers. We are dubbing the SLO Co Farm Trail as the County's Largest Grocery Store! Also reminding locals that they support the Farm Trail when ordering their meals from local restaurants who source from our local farms & purveyors.



Bringing folks together with locally grown

Our farmers markets are still very well attended and folks maintaining and respecting social distancing. Lodging, not so much...tourism is a huge business here and all associated industries are being greatly impacted. A few of our distilleries have started producing hand sanitizers. Those with refer trucks, cold storage are key to keeping the commodities moving & preserved.

We are encouraging virtual farm tours – sharing of favorite recipes using local groceries – referring each other. Know who's got what and who can get what!



## Underwood Family Farms: Events cancelled, farm stand busy, new box delivery program

### Festival cancelled

Craig Underwood, owner of [Underwood Family Farms](#) with two popular locations in Ventura County, reports that he has cancelled his Spring/Easter festival and all animal activities and events for the public. The Spring festival would have involved hiring an additional hundred or so employees, in addition to the 50 to 80 regularly employed on this agritourism and U-Pick operation.

### Produce demand strong - new box delivery program

Underwood says that due to increased produce demand and some sharing of hours, none of the regular workers have been laid off. The farm stand is two to three times busier than normal for this time of year. The farm has also started a new pre-packed "healthy harvest box" available for delivery locally through FedEx. Underwood has found the boxes to be successfully received, although he only started the program a few days ago, and FedEx to be very reasonable.

### Sunflower days?

Craig Underwood is hoping to be able to offer a festive public event in late Spring or Summer, perhaps featuring sunflowers.

## From Glenn Tanaka, Tanaka Farms, Irvine:

### Produce sales up, U-Pick soon

Yes, our produce sales at the stand are doing well and subscriptions for our CSA boxes are up. Even though our overall sales are 60% down because of the cancelled school tours and families that come out on the weekend, I am extremely grateful that our produce sales are where they are. Our customers are extremely thankful for us being open as we are for their support. Our strawberries will be coming into peak production soon and I plan to open up our U-pick as I feel confident that we will be able to provide a safe environment for our customers.

### Keeping it clean & safe, curbside pick-up

As with many businesses, we have done what we can to inform our customers of our concerns for the health and safety of both them and our employees. The customers have seen that we provide disposable gloves not only for our employees but for the customers as they shop, we have spread the produce out to provide better social distancing in the produce stand, we limit the number of customer inside, we provide clear markings to space our customers out in the check in and check out lines, they see our staff constantly sanitizing common areas, especially the credit card machines and pens and we have provided new pre-order curbside pick up of our produce. Customers are extremely sensitive right now and they are aware and do notice steps taken by businesses to insure the well being of everyone.

[Tanaka Farms](#)



## Farm stays? It depends...



Some California farm stays are shutting down, particularly if they have multiple units with no realistic way to keep guests separated from each other, while some are remaining open with extra care to protect themselves, their families and their guests.

**Communication with guests is essential.**  
From **Scottie Jones**, farm stay operator and Executive Director of [Farm Stay USA](#):

This is the letter I have sent out to guests for their arrival on the farm – mostly dealing with comfort, safety, and connection to the outside world:

- “We are looking forward to hosting your family on our farm this weekend. You will be on the farm by yourself for Friday night and as of Saturday there will be another family from Portland in the farm house. The cottage and farm house are quite far from each other and we will likely split up farm chores between houses so everyone can keep their distance from all but their family and us.
- We are doing everything we can to make sure you have access to sanitizing products while you are here, which in some areas may be as simple as bleach diluted in water in a spray bottle. In looking at what we provide our guests, I realized I am going to have to make our games and toys off-limits as I just don't think we can keep all these sanitized. Please feel free to bring your own. There are two DVD players in the cottage, but no TV. There is pretty good wifi coverage across the farm. Cell coverage for AT&T only unless you feel like hiking up to the top of one of the hills that surround the farm.”

I am thinking of adding a paragraph about bringing their own sanitizing products if they have favorites and things they want to carry around. I will also be putting in the possibility of cancellation at the last moment if the state enacts a rule prohibiting lodging and/or anyone on the farm gets sick.

**Nori Naylor**, of [Naylor's Organic Family Farm Stay](#) reports that they had a busy February and early March and were looking forward to a great year, but are shutting down for now, mostly out of concern for the health of Nori's elderly mother who Nori is helping to care for. The last guests stayed in mid-March.

Nori and her husband Mike may open to guests, if it seems safe by then, in May or June. Each of the Naylor's rooms and units have separate doors to the outside, and she can lock the inside doors so guests do not have access to the rest of the house; each unit is self-contained. The Naylor's are also planning to open their U-Pick operation in June. They always wash and sanitize picking baskets between



customers and are able to keep groups of people apart if needed.

Bob McKeller, of [Seven Sycamores Ranch](#) has cancelled all weddings, tours and school field trips and furloughed six employees until May 1st. He says his cottage is rented in conjunction with weddings 90 percent of the time, but he is willing to rent it now if anyone requests a booking.

## Resources for dealing in Covid-19 times

### Some guidance & resources

- [CSA and Online Sales Resources for Farmers](#) from the Community Alliance with Family Farmers (CAFF), including General Resources, COVID-19 Resources, CSA and Direct Online Sales Tips, CSA and online sales software
- [Strategic Considerations: Coronavirus Social Media Content](#) from [Visit California](#) - Best practices from Visit California for developing social media content during COVID-19
- [Safe Handling Practices for Fresh Produce during COVID-19](#) a presentation by Jennifer Sowerwine, UC Cooperative Extension Specialist
- [Cleaning and Sanitizing with Bleach](#), from the CDC
- [Farm Based Education Network Summer Camp call](#) March 25 - Summer camps around the US are facing a dynamic new situation with coronavirus in our midst. Join Andrew Ziv of Eden Village Camp and the FBEN for a call to share your learning and plans related to your upcoming camp season. [Register here](#)
- [USDA Service Centers during COVID-19](#) - Agricultural producers should visit [farmers.gov/coronavirus](https://farmers.gov/coronavirus) for the latest information on available services and the latest status of service centers impacted by locally-specific health measures.
- [Airbnb Extenuating Circumstances and the coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#) - information about coverage and cancellations
- [California Department of Public Health COVID-19 updates and information](#)
- Finally, [Coronavirus HR Comms & Resources Guide](#) a crowdsourced collection of resources for HR and business leaders to help inform and support Coronavirus response plans. Here you'll find a curated collection of public Coronavirus response communications, templates, news, remote work, hiring impact, and resources.

## UC SAREP Agritourism Programs

### Agritourism Intensive classes coming Fall/Winter 2020-2021 in Mendocino and SLO Counties

UC SAREP, with funding from Western Extension Risk Management Education, will be offering three-session agritourism planning classes during Winter 2020-21 for farmers and ranchers who are considering starting or expanding agritourism operations. The classes will be held in Mendocino and San Luis Obispo Counties, and will be open to farmers and ranchers in each region. Here is [information](#)



[from earlier similar classes.](#)

We invite experienced agritourism operators, tourism professionals, county staff and agricultural organization representatives in Mendocino and SLO Counties to join our planning/advisory committee for these classes, in order to best meet the needs of each region. Planning will start in July 2020. Interested? Contact Penny at [paleff@ucdavis.edu](mailto:paleff@ucdavis.edu).

## Update: National Agritourism and Direct Sales Survey



Thanks to all of you who took time to complete the National Agritourism and Direct Sales Survey organized by the University of Vermont Extension team. We received more than 1500 responses from around the country, including 141 from California agritourism operators.

The team is beginning to sort and analyze the responses. We hope to have a preliminary report to you soon.

### CAN VISITORS FIND YOU?

Try [www.calagtour.org](http://www.calagtour.org)

### FREE LISTING AND EVENT PROMOTION

We invite California farmers and ranchers operating agritourism businesses or events to complete the [directory application](#) or [event listing form](#) online.

Already listed? Please check your listing and send us any changes using the [update form](#).

Or - just add [paleff@ucdavis.edu](mailto:paleff@ucdavis.edu) to your email blast list to share your event news - we'll grab what we can for the calendar.

- Also: Please check out the visitor-targeted Facebook page - [California Agritourism Adventures](#) - like us, share, and send us your news



## General Agritourism Resources

- [California Agritourism](#) - a UC ANR website compiling information and resources for farmers, ranchers and everyone involved in California Agritourism into one easy-to-use location
- [Agritourism Intensive 2019](#) - agendas, handouts and presentations from the 3-session agritourism planning class offered in Calaveras and Santa Cruz Counties, Jan-Mar, 2019
- [Hosting Dinners on Your California Farm](#) - a guide published online in November 2018 by UC SAREP
- [The Big Event: Hosting a Festival on Your California Farm](#) - a guide published online in October 2019 by UC SAREP
- [Guest Lodging on Your California Farm or Ranch](#) - a guide published online in October 2019 by UC SAREP
- [Planning a U-Pick Operation on Your California Farm](#) - a guide published online in July 2018 by UC SAREP
- [Marketing Regional Farms and Wineries: A Guide for California Agricultural Marketing Groups](#) - published online in November 2015 by the UC Small Farm Program.
- [Farm-Based Education Network](#) - A free international 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.
- [Farm Stay U.S.](#) - The website of the U.S. Farm Stay Association, promoting farm and ranch stays in the United States and providing resources for farm stay operators and visitors.

- **Hipcamp Landshare** - rural accommodations marketing site - If you are legally permitted to offer camping, cabins, or any kind of farm stay or guest ranch on your land, these San Francisco based folks may be good marketing partners.
- **Harvest Hosts** - a program that connects farms and wineries with RV owners. Invite Harvest Hosts' RV owners to park overnight on your property and benefit from the goodwill that motivates them to make purchases.
- **Integrating Safety into Agritourism** - This website contains a variety of walk-throughs, checklists, signs and other resources to help owners identify and fix health and safety hazards.
- **AgritourismReady website** - Created by Ohio State University Extension: A One Stop Shop for preparing your emergency management plan
- **North American 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 and guides, handouts and presentations from workshops, articles and current projects
- **World Wide Opportunities on Organic Farms** (WWOOF US) - linking visitors with organic farmers for educational exchange

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# UC DAVIS

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## AGRICULTURAL SUSTAINABILITY INSTITUTE

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**University of California**  
Agriculture and Natural Resources



Russell Ranch  
Sustainable Agriculture Facility



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### Links to ASI Programs

[UC ANR Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education Program](#) | [Student Farm](#)  
[Russell Ranch Sustainable Agriculture Facility](#) | [Inter-Institutional Network for Food, Agriculture, and Sustainability](#) | [Food Systems Informatics](#)