



# California AgTour Connections

## Agritourism News & Notes

May 2012

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### Greetings!

Earth day. Blossoms. Baby animals. Gardening. Horseback riding. Birdwatching. Sunshine. Mothers Day. Strawberries.... City and suburban people have many reasons this season to visit your farm or ranch. You probably are very busy keeping up with them, so thank you for opening this newsletter.

It was great to see some of you at the [Small Farm Conference](#) in Ventura and to get to know some of you better at the last sessions of agritourism planning [classes](#) in Orland and Fresno. We are excited to learn that we have been promised the funding to offer similar three-session courses in Sacramento, Sonoma and San Diego Counties, and will get to work with more of you soon.

This issue contains news of our new project helping develop collaborations with county fairs, updates about California's version of a "cottage food" bill, and a smattering of news from around the state about your farm trail maps, passport weekends, innovative events and work on county plans and regulations. Please stay in touch and keep sharing your stories.

Sincerely,

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

## Fairground Farms and Farmyard Festivals; Showcasing California Specialty Crops

The Small Farm Program is excited to be working with the [CDFA Division of Fairs and Exhibitions](#) to help California specialty crop farmers and agritourism operators build connections with fair professionals. Together we are organizing outreach meetings to be hosted by seven fairs throughout the state, during fair time, for farmers, agricultural and tourism professionals and community leaders to learn first-hand what the industry has to offer and to discuss potential ideas for collaboration with fair organizers. **You're invited to meet with us at the fair for a workshop and tour.**

- Thousands of people will attend your county fair this year. Will they taste your specialty crops, learn about your farm, orchard, vineyard or nursery, or play in your pumpkin patch?
- Do you need a commercial kitchen for producing value-added products?
- Would you like to learn how the experts manage crowds, hire seasonal staff, contract with vendors, serve food and park a thousand cars?
- Would you like to meet local fair professionals interested in new partnerships?



Merced County Spring Fair

Each meeting will include a four-hour workshop with brainstorming and discussion sessions, lunch, and an afternoon tour of the fair. The registration fee is \$20. **Here is the schedule:**

- Thursday, June 14 - Shasta District Fair, Anderson
- Thursday July 26 - Amador County Fair, Plymouth
- Thursday August 2 - Ventura County Fair, Ventura
- Thursday August 9 - Napa Town & Country Fair, Napa
- Thursday August 16 - Yolo County Fair, Woodland
- Thursday September 13 - Santa Cruz County Fair, Watsonville
- Thursday October 4 - Big Fresno Fair, Fresno

Please join us at the fair near you. [Register here](#) for the first workshop at the Shasta District Fair. Check our website for [updates and information](#) about the project and to register for any other of the workshops, or call Penny, 530-752-7779.

### Agritourism class materials available

More than 70 farmers and ranchers attended the recent "Agritourism Intensive" class in Orland or the "Guide to Agritourism" class in Fresno, and are now on their way to completing plans for their new agritourism operations and making changes to reduce their risk in current operations.

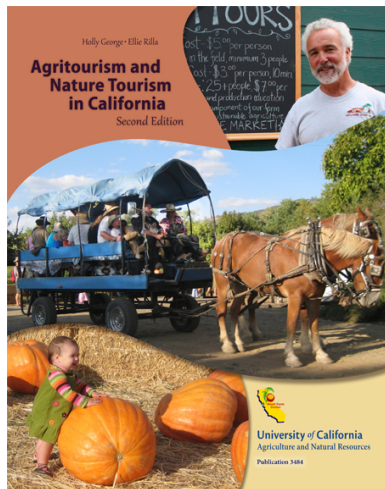
If you missed the classes, you can find a lot of the handouts and presentations [here](#). Funding for these classes was provided by the Washington State University Western Center for Risk Management Education and the USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA).



### More agritourism planning classes coming soon

We just learned that the [Western Center for Risk Management Education](#) selected our recent proposal for funding. This means that we'll be able to work with UC Cooperative Extension Farm Advisors and other partners to offer interactive agritourism planning classes for farmers and ranchers in **Sacramento, Sonoma and San Diego Counties** in the fall and winter of 2012 - 2013.

Watch for news about these "Agritourism Intensive" courses. People from Sonoma, Sacramento and San Diego County Farm Bureaus, Sonoma County Farm Trails, the Sacramento River Delta Agritourism Association, and the National Agricultural Law Center will join us in this project, making sure that each course is best customized for farmers and ranchers in each region. More information coming soon.



## CalAgTour.org directory and free event listing

### Your customers are looking for you here!

You are missing out on some free publicity if your agritourism operation and events are not listed in UC's Agritourism Directory, [CalAgTour.org](http://CalAgTour.org). If you are a working farmer or rancher operating an agritourism business or organizing agritourism events, we invite you to complete the [directory application](#) or the [event listing](#) application online so we can include your business and events in the directory. Listings and event postings are free. The site is visited by thousands of people every month.

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](#)!



## California Homemade Food Act, AB 1616

California's version of a "Cottage Food Bill", which was introduced in the State Assembly by Assembly-member Mike Gatto (D-Los Angeles) unanimously passed the Assembly Committee on Health on April 17, but has a long way to go to become law.



The bill creates a new category of food production called a cottage food operation, which, unlike other types of commercial food facilities, can be operated out of a home kitchen. The types of foods that a cottage food operation can sell are limited to "non-potentially hazardous foods," which are foods that are unlikely to grow harmful bacteria or other toxic microorganisms at room temperature. A few

examples of such foods include:

- Baked goods without cream, custard, or meat fillings, such as breads, tortillas, cookies, churros, and pastries
- Jams, jellies, preserves, and fruit butter
- Candy, such as toffee and brittle

- Fruit pies, and fruit or vegetable tamales and empanadas
- Dried fruit
- Dried pasta
- Granola and other dried cereal
- Roasted coffee and dried tea
- Kombucha
- Other similar products specified in rules to be adopted by the California Department of Public Health

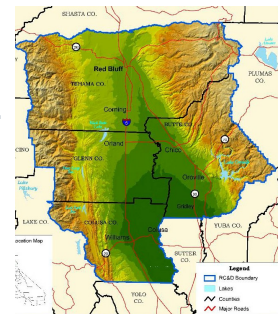
The bill includes negotiated requirements for a "cottage food operation" including registration with a county health department; permits, inspections and fees for operations conducting indirect sales (to local shops and restaurants); packaging and labeling requirements; adherence to sanitary procedures; and maximum limits on the operation size of \$50,000 annual gross revenue and not more than one employee, in addition to help from family or household members.

Co-authors to the bill include Assemblymembers Jared Huffman, Bob Wieckowski, V. Manuel Perez, Brian Nestande and Senator Mark DeSaulnier.

Read the [full text of the bill](#) here. For more information from bill supporters, contact the [Sustainable Economies law Center](#)

## A few of many maps & collaborative events in the works...

- **Upstate California Adventures** - The Central Sacramento Valley Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D) Council is planning a new version of their popular 2005 "Upstate California Ag, Nature and Heritage Tourism" map, promoting farm and ranch adventures and many other rural activities for visitors to **Colusa, Glenn, Butte, Tehama, and Shasta Counties**. This version of the map project will include online links and apps for mobile users. Contact: [Larry Akin](#), 530-519-9288



- **Visit Mendocino County** - [Richard Strom](#) of Mendocino County's [official travel site](#) is gathering information from county agritourism operators who would like to be included in a new Farm Trails Map. Contact: Richard at 866-466-3636
- **Tehama Trails** 2nd Annual [Passport Weekend](#) will be June 2 & 3. Contact: Kari Dodd, Tehama County Farm Bureau, 530-527-7882
- **Sacramento River Delta Grown Agri-Tourism Association**, based near Courtland in Sacramento County, is just about to print their first Farm Trails Map and is planning a Passport Weekend for August 11-12. Contact: [Amber McDowell](#) or 916-775-4869, or visit the group's [Facebook page](#)
- **Tell and Sell Your Story** - UCCE Sonoma County and [Sonoma County Farm Trails](#) are presenting "**Agritourism, Part 2**" on June 14 from 10 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. at the SRJC Shone Farm Pavilion in Forestville. Interested agritourism farms and ranches will "speed date" with local and regional tourism people (caterers, tour operators, event planners) [Registration](#) Contact: [Alex Pozzi](#),



## County Regulatory Updates - a few of many...



- **San Joaquin County** - The San Joaquin county Winery Ordinance is scheduled to go before the San Joaquin County Planning Commission on June 7. At issue is a moratorium that limits new wineries from holding events. In preparation, Community Development Director Kerri Sullivan will speak with the Lodi Wine community at the Holiday Inn Express on May 9 at 9 a.m. To attend, please [RSVP](#) or call Nancy (209) 365-1195
- **Yuba County** - County Economic Development Coordinator John Fleming heads an advisory committee that is looking into introducing a unique agricultural overlay zoning ordinance, similar to Butte County's, to encourage agritourism in the foothills. A group of small-acreage Yuba County foothills growers are meeting to discuss their goals and what regulatory changes they would like to see. Contact: North Yuba Food group chairperson, [Janet Marchant](#) or Planning Director Wendy Hartman, 530-749-5681
- **Lake County** - County Community Development Director Richard Coel reports that Lake County is currently updating its agritourism zoning ordinances, with completion expected by December 2012. Contact: [Richard Coel](#), 707-263-2221



**Merced County** - Jean Okuye of the Merced County Farm Bureau and [Valley Land Alliance](#) reports that the Agricultural Element of the new Merced County General Plan is now completed, with wording supportive of agritourism, so it is time to discuss changes to agritourism zoning ordinances. Contact: [Jean Okuye](#), (209) 756-2421

For more information about the process of changing agritourism regulations, and some examples of county general plans and ordinances relating to agritourism, see the Small Farm Program [website section](#).

