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California AgTour Connections

UC Agritourism News & Notes

May 2015

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Greetings!

First a question: Would you rather read this newsletter in a mobile format? Please [click here](#) for a 2 question survey to tell us if we should switch it up!

We're excited to share some maps with you in this issue, showing where agritourism is concentrated in California, as well as the report from the Statewide Agritourism Summit held in Woodland on April 8.

Thanks very much to all of you who completed and returned the survey of California agritourism operators, either online or by mail. We are still compiling the results and will have a report to you within a few months.

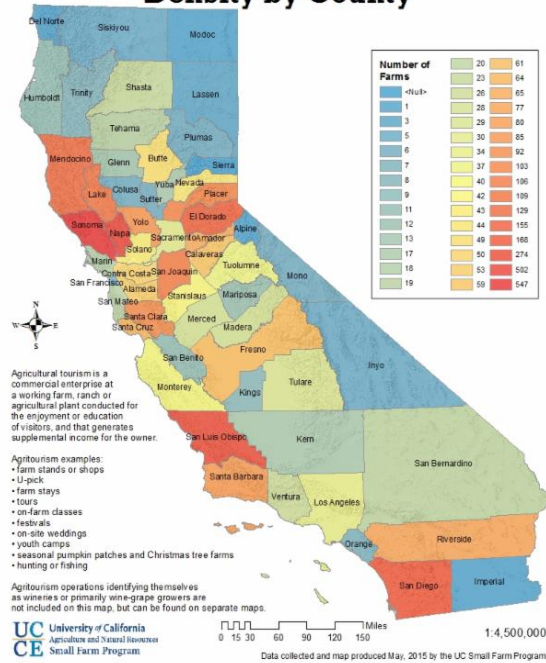
More news below about the Small Farm Conference (in Sacramento March 2016), updates to www.calagtour.org, and agritourism planning classes coming this winter. Also, Sonoma County Farm Trails offers their experience putting on two big public events in one month. Finally, we introduce some local marketing partners and share a few resources. Have a happy June, and please stay in touch!

Sincerely,

Penny Leff, Agritourism Coordinator
[UC Small Farm Program](#)

California Agritourism Maps

California Agritourism Operation Density by County



invited the public to the vineyard site for tours, tastings and/or sales. Our final winery list included 2166 wineries. Again, we probably missed a few of you and included a few that don't quite meet the criteria.

Download [agritourism map pdf](#).

Download [winery map pdf](#).

Download [agritourism/winery map pdf](#).

Agritourism Intensive - in Stanislaus, Shasta and Plumas Counties

3-session agritourism planning classes coming Winter 2015 - 2016

Are you considering agritourism or nature tourism on your farm or ranch?
Would you like to build your agritourism or nature tourism business?

This class is for you!

- Local agritourism operators will share their own experiences.
- Participants will learn from experts in business planning, regulatory compliance, risk management, hospitality and cost-effective marketing, including social media.
- The hands-on, interactive activities will guide participants as they assess their own farms or ranches for agritourism potential and start their own business, risk management and marketing plans.
- Each participant will receive a free copy of the extensive handbook, "Agritourism and Nature Tourism in California", which will be used as a text for the class.



Agritourism operators in Plumas, Stanislaus and Shasta: If you would like to be involved in planning or sharing your experiences at one of these classes, please contact [Penny Leff](#), 530-752-7779. We'd love to connect.

This material is based upon work supported by USDA/NIFA under Award Number 2012-49200-20030.



United States
Department
of Agriculture

National Institute
of Food
and Agriculture

Report from the CA Statewide Agritourism Summit 2015



The California Statewide Agritourism Summit, held in Woodland on April 8, 2015, was attended by more than 150 people, including agritourism operators, agritourism association representatives, tourism professionals, state and county staff and elected officials, agricultural and tourism educators, agricultural and community organization representatives, and others involved in California agritourism.

The group heard presentations from Sierra Oro Farm Trail founders about their first 10 years, and from Visit California about statewide agritourism promotion opportunities. A panel from Yolo County discussed their collaborative efforts in making changes in zoning ordinances affecting agritourism. Summit participants talked in smaller groups about challenges and possibilities, and made plans for ongoing regional and statewide working groups to continue the discussions.

[Summit presentations, agenda, handouts](#)
[Report Back](#) from group discussions at the Summit

Sacramento region farmers & market managers needed... Help plan the 2016 California Small Farm Conference in Sacramento



Get involved and help shape the 2016 California Small Farm Conference that will be held March 5 - 8, 2016 in Sacramento! Members of the 2016 Local Planning Committee will play a significant role in assisting the California Small Farm Conference in designing relevant and meaningful workshops and field courses. Please join us:

Local Planning Committee Meeting 1
 June 17, 2015 from 12:30 to 2:30pm
 DoubleTree by Hilton Sacramento
 2001 Point West Way
 Sacramento, CA 95815

During this first meeting we will ask for insight into important local issues affecting small farmers and discuss local small farm educational and partnering opportunities. This will be the first of three meetings before the Conference in March. Do you know someone else who would be a valuable addition to the Local Planning Committee? Please share this invitation.

[Learn More and RSVP](#)

NEW: Add a picture to your listing on www.CalAgTour.org

Please email a picture to go with your listing to Penny at paleff@ucdavis.edu.

Check out our new link and the expanding agritourism promotion on the [Visit California website](#)!



Thousands of people searched the UC Agritourism Directory & calendar last month for California farms and ranches to visit. Visits to the site are increasing; we're seeing an average of about 20 percent more visitors each week than last year.

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 it as needed. Send us your [event news](#). (add paleff@ucdavis.edu to your email news blast list or use the form on the home page of the site.)

Cottage Food Workshop in San Luis Obispo

Workshop offered by UCCE San Luis Obispo on June 15

Are you interested in making processed foods in your home or farm kitchen and selling them? Come to a one-day workshop about Cottage Foods. You will learn about the Cottage Food Law, food science and sanitation, packaging and storage, and how to manage and market a Cottage Food business.

Who should attend?

This workshop is designed especially for farmers of fruits, vegetables, nuts, herbs, and honey interested in making value-added products in home kitchens as Cottage Food Operations (CFOs). Workshop is open to everyone.



What is a Cottage Food Operation?

The California Homemade Food Act (AB1616) allows individuals to prepare and package certain non-potentially hazardous foods in private-home kitchens referred to as "Cottage Food Operations" (CFOs). Processed meat, dairy, fermented foods, and juices are NOT legally acceptable cottage foods.

Please come join us for this one day event: Monday, June 15, 2015

8:30 a.m. to 4:15 p.m.

Morning refreshments and lunch will be provided.

Location: UC Cooperative Extension

2156 Sierra Way, Suite C, San Luis Obispo, CA 93401

Registration required: \$25 with payment by June 8 or
\$40 at the door, space permitting

[Register online](#)

[Workshop flier and agenda](#)

This project is funded by the California Department of Food and Agriculture's Specialty Crop Block Grant Program

Sonoma County Farm Trails Shows Us How!

Blossoms, Bees & Barnyard Babies back-to-back with BBQ, Brews & Barn Dance

Carmen Snyder, Executive Director of [Sonoma County Farm Trails](#), has been busy this month organizing two major events to benefit Sonoma County Farm Trail members. She shared a little bit about the events and offers a few tips for other groups:

- **Blossoms, Bees & Barnyard Babies**

Popular - About 2000 visitors spent time at 44 participating farms and other businesses on the weekend of May 2nd and 3rd, as this free open farm tour event returned after a hiatus of four years. Some farms saw more than 500 visitors, and several farm stands had record sales days.

Registration required - Although the event was free and open to all, visitors were asked to register on-line, and then were emailed a [program](#) and a link to the online [interactive map](#). Farm Trails promoted the event primarily online through social media. Boosted Facebook posts generated 200 registrations the following day. A few days before the event, Carmen closed registration at 2000 people to make sure that none of the farms were overwhelmed with too many visitors. However, she said she will not do this again as it disappointed many late registrants who would have loved to attend, while many who signed up very early did not show up. No farms were overwhelmed.

Largest number of participants - Carmen credits the participation of the largest number of farms ever to the fact that the open farm event was managed in a way that made it easier for them. Participating farms could decide to be open either day, or both, and more than 50 percent took the option of only being open one day of the weekend event.





Financial solvency - Blossoms, Bees & Barnyard Babies is operated as a benefit for Sonoma County Farm Trails members, rather than as a fund-raiser for the organization. The association was able to put on the event after a break of four years because it is now on a sound financial footing after an identity crisis several years ago. Finances have improved, says Carmen, because Farm Trails is putting more emphasis on the benefits of being a member, receives

critical support from the county in the form of a share of Transient Occupancy Tax receipts, has increased community buy-in and sponsorships, and has tightened up operations on the organization's major fundraising event, the Gravenstein Apple Fair.

Some suggestions for Open Farm Day events:

- Have compelling and well-plotted routes and clusters of operations. If neighbors are involved, you are more likely to get a larger number of visitors. Visitors enjoy learning about the terrain and culture of a small region, and not having to drive too far.
- Request that each farm add something special for visitors that is not offered on other days - such as a tour, a tasting, live music, or a demonstration
- Make it as easy as possible for farmer/participants. Sonoma County Farm Trails kept the hours standard and manageable (10 to 4), recruited volunteers to help where needed, and educated visitors about farm visit etiquette.

• BBQ, Brews and BarnDance

This ticketed fundraiser event for 200 people on May 30 will promote local farmers, with the food and drink all organic, and all coming from within a radius of 30 miles. This is the third year for this event, which started as a necessity to raise funds so that Farm Trails could manage the upfront costs of the Apple Fair. The first year, farmers donated all the food and drink. This year, being in a better financial situation, Farm Trails does not ask for donations but pays the farmers for their contributions.

Cider and cheese - The dinner will start at the Dutton Ranch location with a meet-your-farmer reception, a curated tasting with 8 to 10 local cider and cheese producers. Then chefs from a local Farm-to-Fork restaurant will serve a meal created from all local ingredients, followed by a silent auction, music and dancing.

Marketing - For this event, Carmen uses a mixture of print and online advertising, as well as a lot of postcards, posters and fliers. Again, she finds

BBQ, Brews and BarnDance
3rd Annual Kick-off for the
Gravenstein Apple Fair
Meet-your-Farmer Cheese & Brews Reception
Dinner prepared by Chefs Daniel Kedan & Marianna Gardenhire
Music by Cahoots • Silent Auction • Dancing

SATURDAY, MAY 30 • 5:30 to 10PM
Join us in Sebastopol!

Tickets available at: GravensteinAppleFair.com & FarmTrails.org

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MANZANITA, DUTTON RANCH, BACKYARD, and others.

boosted posts on Facebook most effective, sometimes generating 2000 views and multiple shares. Even if these do not result in ticket sales, they are good promotion for the farms and the organization. She is leaning more toward online marketing, but still runs print ads in local papers. However, she gets better response from a banner ad in the online version of the local major newspaper than from a small print ad, and it's cheaper!

Local Partners for Agritourism - a busy farmer's best friend?

Are you too busy farming to organize an agritourism event? Would you like to work with someone passionate about connecting the public to your farm or ranch? You may want to talk with one of these women:

- Lynette Somme, [FARMstead Ed](#), San Luis Obispo - Lynette Somme describes herself as an agricultural matchmaker and party planner. She promotes locally grown and locally made via pop-up agricultural educational events, bringing folks out to farms, ranches and production facilities. The class model is to tour the hosting venue, teach a "class-room" session on the topic at hand (i.e, Pasture to Plate: All about Pork, Garden to Glass; Grow your own Cocktail), participate in a hands on experience, shopping a pop-up mercantile, and gathering around a table with the farmers and each other to enjoy a meal made from the ingredients grown on the farm while continuing to share and learn. Lynette organizes and promotes the event, arranges with a local caterer to prepare a meal using the host farm's products, invites complementary partners such as a local winery or brewery to offer a tasting, and covers all the costs of the event from the fees she collects from participants. She describes FARMstead Ed as a marketing program for the farmer. Download a flier about [FARMstead Ed](#) and [upcoming events](#).
- 
- Kat Merrick, [Totally Local Ventura County](#) - Totally Local VC was born in 2009 with three essential components - educate, advocate and celebrate. The "Dinner at the..." dinner series is a highly successful, farm-to-table, upscale event featuring local chefs preparing locally-produced foods in a picturesque local, outdoor venue with the participation of local wineries, breweries and other local vendors, with a portion of the proceeds from each dinner going to a local charity. Kat also organizes [Totally Local VC Farm Tours](#) for groups, with a lunch and transportation always included.
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- Elizabeth Hill, the owner and operator of [West Marin Food & Farm Tours](#), is a certified Natural Chef, a UC Master Gardener, a Stanford graduate, and a credentialed teacher with a Masters degree in Education. She was born and raised in West Marin. Since 2012, Elizabeth has been leading exclusive tasting tours to the farms, fisheries, creameries and wineries of West Marin for groups of various sizes. She also organizes [farm-to-table dinners](#), complete with farm tours, at West Marin farms.
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- Penny Ellis, organizer of the [Bay Area Food & Farm Tours](#) Meetup group, moved back to Santa Cruz in 2012. She is a member of Slow Food South Bay, and takes a different approach to helping people explore the agricultural bounty of Monterey Bay/Santa Cruz. Penny organizes farm tours to local farms through the "Meetup" program, with no or minimal cost to the participants. She sets up the dates with the farmers, arranges car-pooling through the online meetup system, and in general connects interested visitors with local food and farm events, promoting CSAs, farm stands and farmers' market sales as she goes.



Note: We provide this information solely as a convenience to you, and not as an endorsement of these businesses.

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
- [Farm Stay U.S.](#) - A website operated by the U.S. Farm Stay Association (and Scottie Jones of Leaping Lamb Farm in Alsea, Oregon), for promoting farm and ranch stays in the United States. The site includes resource sections for farm stay operators and for farm stay visitors.



Funding Opportunity

- [USDA Rural Development Value Added Producer Grants](#) - Due July 2, 2015
The VAPG program helps agricultural producers enter into value-added activities related to the processing and/or marketing of bio-based, value-added products. Generating new products, creating and expanding marketing opportunities, and increasing producer income are the goals of this program. You may receive priority if you are a beginning farmer or rancher, a socially-disadvantaged farmer or rancher, a small or medium-sized farm or ranch structured as a family farm, a farmer or rancher cooperative, or are proposing a mid-tier value chain. Grants are awarded through a national competition.

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.

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