



July 2011

California AgTour Connections

Agritourism News & Notes

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Greetings!

Hello. I know your summer season is keeping you busy, but I hope you have a minute to read this newsletter.

It was wonderful to meet so many of you at the recent "[Growing Agritourism](#)" workshops and followup gatherings. Thank you to everyone who took part. The challenges in each region seemed very similar, but the solutions in land use planning, collaborative marketing and innovative operations were inspiringly different everywhere.

Summer is planning time for us. The [UC Small Farm Program](#) is organizing a statewide agritourism summit in November to strategize together about regional and statewide collaboration and to share new ideas. We hope many of you will be able to join us for that meeting in Stockton. We are also organizing, with some of you, two different three-part business planning workshops for agritourism operators, one in Fresno and one in the Butte/Colusa/Glenn/Tehama region, to be offered this fall and winter. For more information or to help with planning, please [contact me](#).

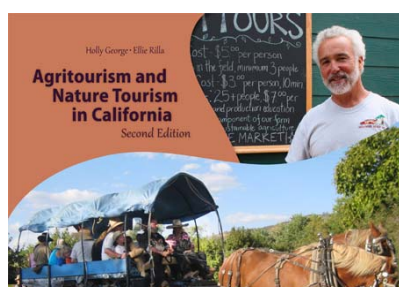
Our [Facebook](#) page and [CalAgTour.org](#) directory and events calendar get more attention every month. Please use them to promote yourselves!

This newsletter includes advice from insurance agents, ideas from Lake County, USDA funding news, links to some national experts, new books, partnership possibilities, workshops and more.

Thanks for doing what you do. Please stay in touch.

Sincerely,
Penny Leff, UC Small Farm Program agritourism coordinator

Hot off the press: 2nd edition agritourism manual Available very soon from ANR Publications



Long-time University of California agritourism and nature tourism advisors Ellie Rilla and Holly George have just completed the second edition of their extensive manual, ***Agritourism and Nature Tourism in California***.

The easy-to-use workbook will walk you



through the steps needed to establish your own tourism enterprise. Included are hands-on activities that can help you assess, plan, develop and evaluate your farm or ranch's tourism potential. This fresh edition contains a completely new marketing chapter, new case studies and updated resources.

The revised manual will be available from the University of California's ANR Publications by the end of July. [Order online](#) or call 1-800-994-8849.

Online agritourism course this fall Ten week course offers in-depth study opportunity

I'll be teaching another session of an *online* course this fall for UC Davis Extension - [Agritourism Development: Selling the Experience, Supporting the Farm, Building the Community](#). The fall session will start in early October, so you have plenty of time to consider signing up.



Developed in partnership with UC Davis Extension and the UC Small Farm Program (a UC Cooperative Extension Program), the course examines the growing demand for agritourism and the expectations of agritourists and works with students to assess local opportunities, create a plan, develop and market an agritourism enterprise, and to collaborate with others in the community for success.

More information is available on the [UC Davis Extension website](#). If you have any questions, please feel free to [contact me](#). I hope to see you *online* soon!

Save the date - statewide summit November 4 California agritourism leaders to meet in Stockton



With the help of a grant from WSARE's Professional Development Program for California, the UC Small Farm Program is inviting agritourism leaders from all over the state to strategize about building better support for agritourism operators in California.

While California agritourism has so far been primarily organized at the county and regional level, other states have organized statewide agritourism associations. At this daylong professional development workshop, experts including Martha Glass of the [North Carolina Agritourism Networking Association](#) and leaders of the [Apple Hill Growers' Association](#) will help us explore the relationships and benefits involved in both statewide agritourism programs and local/regional agritourism programs.

Participants will also take away a toolkit of concrete ideas, resources and starter projects to organize agritourism in their own regions, including social media tools to put to work and/or share with others.



This workshop is designed for agritourism operators, agricultural, tourism and community development professionals, county staff and officials, and others involved in California agritourism. Stay tuned - more info soon.



Join our Facebook page & listserv to connect Let's stay in touch



We're on [Facebook](#) as "AgTour Connections." This is your page; please feel free to use it to share your activities, events, pictures and thoughts! Don't forget to "like" the page.

Also, please join the conversation on the Agtour-connect listserv, hosted by UC Davis. This is an email discussion group for everyone involved in the business of California agritourism. [Sign up here](#) to share your thoughts, questions, news, or updates with other list members.

CalAgTour.org directory & free event listings Your customers are looking for you here!

Twice as many people as last year are searching for California farms and ranches to visit using [CalAgTour.org](#). Listings and event postings are free.

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. If you're already listed, 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](#)!

Value Added Producer Grants from USDA \$37 Million available - Proposals due August 29



[VAPG](#) is a competitive program that **awards grants to agricultural producers** to help them develop farm-related businesses that add value to basic agricultural products through branding, processing, product differentiation, labeling and certification, and marketing. VAPG includes projects that market

inherently value-added production, such as organic crops, grass-fed livestock and locally produced and marketed food products. The California contact person for the VAPG is [Karen Firestein](#), 530-792-5829

The USDA estimates it will make about 250 awards, announced by the end of November 2011, and that the average size grant award will be \$116,000. In the last round of awards, 41% of total awards were under \$50,000.

Applicants may propose any time frame up to three years for the project.
[More helpful information](#)

"Growing Agritourism" workshops wrap up Smaller groups met for follow-up talk and tours



More than 350 people, including farmers, ranchers, agritourism operators, agricultural and tourism professionals, county planners, elected officials and other community leaders, participated in "Growing Agritourism" workshops throughout California over the last few months. The workshops gave the opportunity to exchange innovative ideas and building stronger regional networks for agritourism. Smaller groups met in each region more recently to talk about their own challenges, tour some neighbors' farms and learn from experts about selected issues.

If you were in Salinas on May 18 for the Central Coast region "Growing Agritourism" workshop, you probably met writer William Neuman and photographer Noah Berger from the New York Times. Newman and Berger visited several local farms and wrote [this article](#), which was widely copied in other papers throughout the country.



photo by Noah Berger, NYT

If you participated in one of these workshops, please watch for communication coming to you soon. We'll be getting in touch with everyone who attended to learn more about your latest agritourism activities, plans and collaborations. Thanks in advance for your help!

See [presentations](#) from the first four workshops and [reports](#) from the follow-up meetings.



The workshops, organized by the UC Small Farm Program in cooperation with UC Cooperative Extension and several local sponsors, were funded by Western Sustainable Agriculture Research & Education (WSARE).

Agritourism liability insurance - sharing your risk Survey report, tips from agents and underwriters



[Farm Stay U.S.](#) owner Scottie Jones reports that she only received seven responses from California to her survey of agritourism operators about liability insurance. Unfortunately, that is not enough response for the compiled results to be meaningful for others.

However, two different independent insurance agents and the Nationwide Agribusiness Farm Underwriting Manager for Northern California have talked to regional agritourism groups over the past few months. Here are some thoughts from them about managing agritourism risks.

From Ernie Peters of [Winton Ireland Strom & Green](#) Insurance Agency:

- Agritourism is becoming more popular with farmers and ranchers. This spreads the risk, makes liability insurance more available.
- When hosting an event for an organized group, put their insurance first by getting listed as "additional insured" on their policy
- Be careful to follow employee guidelines; Cal OSHA offers free consultations
- Pre-engineer: Set your operation up to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)
- Pre-examine: Plan for emergencies, have lots of fire extinguishers

From John Dahlmeir of [Dahlmeier Insurance](#) :

- Have a plan about how to handle such problems as drunk visitors
- Increase your deductibles to keep your cost down, because you probably won't file claims for smaller incidents anyway
- Consider whether you need to insure it (such as an older building that may be unsafe), or if it is needed for your operation
- Have visitors sign waivers, stating their understanding of the risks
- An independent insurance agent is better able to shop with different insurance companies for the best coverage for unique exposures than an agent who only represents one company.
- An agent with AFIS certification is better able to understand agricultural issues.

From Kathy Lindquist, [Nationwide Agribusiness](#) Farm Underwriting Manager for Northern California, Oregon and Washington:

- Everything on a farm creates liability. Liability involves the need to manage risk. Risk can be managed in 4 basic ways -
 - Avoid risk (Don't offer that activity)
 - Retain risk (Decide to accept the risk on your own)
 - Minimize risk (Your risk management plan)
 - Transfer risk (Obtain liability insurance)
- You are legally responsible for your employees' actions. Run a background check on a potential employee who will be working with children. Your local law enforcement agency may do a free check.
- Documentation is very important
 - Keep records of safety inspections, safety talks, etc.
 - Written plans and records make you more attractive to an insurance company
 - Keep an incident log book, including pictures of any incidents
- Be open with your insurance agent about your assets

Nationwide Agribusiness will not insure an operation that is primarily entertainment without being a commercial farm or ranch; if you have a working agricultural business, they will work with you as your agritourism operation grows and will put all the different types of liability coverage together into one package policy. Nationwide is familiar with many types of agritourism exposures, and will cover many, but not all. [Find an agent](#)

Spotlight on Lake County

Some of many great ideas

- Lake County Quilt Barn Trail** - A quilt barn square is a traditional quilt block design painted on an 8' x8' wooden panel and hung outside on a building where it can be readily seen.



[The Lake County Quilt Barn Trail](#), established in 2010, is the first quilt trail in the Golden State. Pictured here is the *Squash Blossom*, hung on the Ellis Ranch Barn (constructed in 1887) located on Highway 29 in Lower Lake. Farmers see the barn quilts as a way to get people into the countryside and share the love of the land. Farming families use the barn quilts to memorialize and honor loved ones.

- Lake County Vine Trail #1 - Red Hills Terroir Trail** is a 1.25 mile trail through vineyards in the Red Hills Appellation with stunning views of Clear Lake, Anderson Marsh wetlands and the north shore ridgelines. The loop begins at either [Gregory Graham Winery](#) or [Vigilance Vineyards](#) and Winery, and passes through the vineyards.



The two wineries constructed and maintain the trail, which is open only when the tasting rooms are open. The trail is part of the Konocti Regional Trails system (KRT). The County of Lake and KRT provide promotional assistance for the trail.

- Road signs for worried city-folk** - [Six Sigma Winery](#) tasting room is 1.5 miles off the road, down a gravel driveway that winds through rangeland and vineyards. Potential visitors have been known to turn around after a half mile or so, thinking they're lost. To reassure visitors unfamiliar with the location, Six Sigma



people posted some signs along the road, letting people know they're still

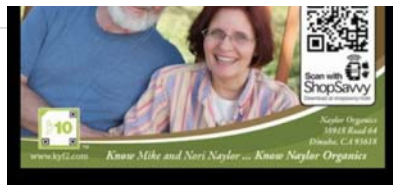


on the right road, and telling them the distance to the tasting room.

Will visitors spend the night in a peach orchard? Naylor's Organic Family Farm Stay gives it a try



Seeing the milky way clear and bright in the night sky wasn't anything special to Dinuba peach growers [Nori and Mike Naylor](#), but they noticed that it was a



simple treat enjoyed by visitors to their new farm stay in the organic orchard. So Nori is thinking about mentioning the stars on Twitter, or Facebook, or on her blog perhaps... [Read more](#)

Feather Down Farm Days

A few luxury tents on your farm or ranch?

Some of you may be interested in a different approach to agritourism. Gijs van den Broek, CEO of [Feather Down Farm Stays USA](#), is looking for a few California farms or ranches for a unique farm stay partnership.

Started in Holland in 2003, Feather Down Farm Days offers a family vacation on working farms in the UK, France, Germany and now in the US. van den Broek says, "People come seeking a slowed-down authentic experience in our luxury tents. With no electricity in the tent, they enjoy evenings by candle and lamp light, making meals on the wood-burning stove and sleeping in comfortable beds. Each tent is also equipped with a flush toilet." The pilot US Farms are in upstate New York and Illinois.



Learn more about [how the program works with farmers](#). Here is the US Feather Down [marketing brochure](#) for visitors.

Gijs van den Broek will be traveling in California this August, and would like to meet with any interested farmers or ranchers. Please [email him](#) or phone 716-226-6323 .

Other great resources

Learn from agritourism experts

- The 2011 Networking Association for Farm Direct Marketing and Agritourism (NAFDMA)



Advanced Learning Retreat will

be at the Roba Family Farms in Pennsylvania October 29 - November 1, 2011. This is a bus tour, workshop, tradeshow, and multi-session conference all rolled into a single, networking production. [Learn more.](#)

- Jane Eckert of **Eckert AgriMarketing** offers many useful articles on her website, blog and newsletter, specifically for agritourism operators. Eckert explains QR codes and online advertising, offers tips to increase profitability, and keeps readers up to date about new trends in agritourism activities and marketing. [Check out her site.](#)



Jane Eckert, CEO
Eckert AgriMarketing

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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,

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