



November 2010

California AgTour Connections

Agritourism News & Notes

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Greetings!

Happy Thanksgiving!

I hope you all are taking a break and enjoying good food with family and friends. The winter is fast on us, with worries for citrus growers, busy times for Christmas tree growers and time to pause and plan for next year's activities for many others.

Here at the [Small Farm Program](#) we've been busy working with many of you to plan six regional agritourism professional development workshops for early 2011. We're also planning an agritourism field course at the upcoming 2011 California Small Farm Conference in San Jose and will be talking about California agritourism at the [EcoFarm Conference](#) in Monterey on January 29.

Our statewide online agritourism directory and calendar of events, [CalAgTour.org](#), has been getting increasing attention from visitors looking for farms and ranches to visit, and has benefited from a growing network of links and mentions on other websites, blogs and social media. Listing is all free for working farms and ranches with agritourism operations.

This issue includes more suggestions for using social media as well as news of funding available from USDA and CDFA.

Thanks for opening this newsletter, and please stay in touch. We hope to see many of you at workshops and other events this winter.

Sincerely,
Penny Leff, UC Small Farm Program agritourism coordinator

CalAgTour.org directory & free event listings

Add your agritourism operation and public events today

The UC Small Farm Program hosts a searchable online directory of California's agricultural tourism operations, for use by visitors looking for a farm or ranch to visit. The directory is located at www.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. The listings and event postings are free. 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.

Please take a look and tell us what else you'd like to see as part of the new CalAgTour.org. Let's fill up that [events calendar](#)!

"Growing Agritourism" Workshops

Please save the dates for upcoming regional workshops



The [Small Farm Program](#) announces a series of "Growing Agritourism" workshops this winter, made possible by funding from Western Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education ([Western SARE](#)).

If you are...

- an agritourism operator
- a tourism professional
- an agricultural organization leader
- a farm advisor or resource manager
- a county planner, regulator or commissioner
- a city, county or state elected official
- a community development professional
- a farmer or rancher considering agritourism

...you are invited to join us for an educational and participatory professional development workshop

- to learn and share the latest in agritourism development and marketing tools
- to network with regional operators and other professionals to organize and promote agritourism
- to discuss common challenges and opportunities
- to build a stronger infrastructure for successful agritourism in the region

Registration is now open for five regional workshops. Please join us!

North Coast: Wednesday, February 16, 2011
Agricultural Center, UCCE Mendocino County, Ukiah CA
information and registration: <http://ucanr.org/ukiahagtour>

North Valley & Mountains: Wednesday, February 23, 2011
Wetter Hall (Next to UCCE Tehama County), Red Bluff CA
information and registration: <http://ucanr.org/redbluffagtour>

Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta: Wednesday, February 2, 2011
Veterans Memorial Building, Rio Vista CA

information and registration: <http://ucanr.org/riovistaagtour>

San Joaquin Valley & Foothills: Wednesday, January 19, 2011
UCCE Merced County, Merced CA

information and registration: <http://ucanr.org/mercedagtour>

Central Coast: Thursday, March 3, 2011

UCCE Monterey County, Salinas CA

information and registration: <http://ucanr.org/prunedaleagtour>

South Coast: TBA

If you'd like fliers or other materials to help promote the workshops in your region, please contact [Penny](#) at 530.752.7779

USDA and CDFA funding available

Proposals due soon for a several programs

[Western SARE](#) is accepting applications for Producer Grants and Professional and Producer Grants until December 3rd.



California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) [Specialty Crop Block Grant Program](#)
Concept Proposals are due December 20.

For more funding ideas, see the USDA's Know Your Farmer, Know Your Food [Grants, Loans and Support](#) page.

Using Social Media to Connect with Customers

by **Ellie Rilla,**

co-author of *Agritourism and Nature Tourism in California*

 Agritourism and Nature Tourism in California cover

We are in the "visual" age where images, on the internet, your website, and your various forms of promotion speak for your product. According to statistics provided by the California Travel & Tourism Commission we know that:

- 86% of Americans travel with their cell phones and use them to call ahead to see what's blooming today or to book an experience
- 70% of 15-30 year olds use social networks such as Facebook to learn about and share with friends. This is growing with older travelers
- 75% of web users trust online reviews more than other written sources
- Almost three quarters of the 98 million travelers in California made their travel arrangements online in 2004(California Travel & Tourism Commission).

Being visible is paramount. Posted customer reviews and ratings are important, and most of all, the visual appearance of your web presence is crucial, whether it's on your website, a Facebook page, your blog, or a twitter account.

While we know that the Internet is the number one source of travel planning and purchasing it's the consumer who is becoming the medium or gateway to your farm or ranch via "social media" and networking sites. Tripadvisor is used by one of each four travelers and blogs about your site are also popular. Randall Travel Marketing predicts this consumer-to-consumer style of travel information sourcing will be one of the largest trends to affect the travel and tourism industry in the near future. Simply put, the consumer is now in control of tourism marketing.

Here are several examples of website portals that will list your farm for greater exposure. All are either free or have a free membership option.

California Agricultural Tourism Directory

<http://www.calagtour.org/>

FarmstayUS

<http://www.farmstayus.com/>

Rural Bounty

<http://www.ruralbounty.com/>

California Small Farm Conference 2011 Small Farms Bright Futures

Join us March 6-8, 2011 in San Jose for the [California Small Farm Conference!](#)

The California Small Farm Conference is the state's premier gathering of small farmers, agricultural students, farmers' market managers and others involved in the small farm industry.

The three day educational conference includes day-long short courses and on-farm tours (including an agritourism tour); focused workshops; engaging keynote addresses and numerous networking opportunities. Everything you need to plan a Big Future.



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
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