



September 2011

California AgTour Connections

Agritourism News & Notes

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Greetings!

Happy harvesting!

Although much of California enjoys year-round harvest seasons, many urban and suburban people still seem to think most about visiting farms and ranches in the fall. We see a huge increase in visits every October to our online directory of California agritourism, [CalAgTour.org](#), as your potential customers search for corn mazes, pumpkin patches, grape stomps, U-pick farms, harvest festivals and other autumn fun. We hope you are harvesting your share of these visitors.

Later, when you have time to breath, please consider joining agritourism leaders from around the state for our [statewide agritourism summit](#). Together perhaps we can chart a course to building a stronger support network for California's innovative enterprises and organizations.

If you are a farmer or rancher considering agritourism, starting a new venture or expanding with new activities, check out our upcoming three-session agritourism planning classes, offered in both [Fresno](#) and [Glenn](#) Counties. Or, particularly if you are involved in developing agritourism in your community, you might be interested in the [online class](#). Read more in this newsletter about these and other educational opportunities.

Also in this issue is news about the California Agricultural Almanac, a new campaign to loosen some food processing regulations, and scholarships for the 2012 California Small Farm Conference. We'll be offering both an agritourism tour and an agritourism workshop at the Small Farm Conference, and hope to see many of you there next March.

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

Sincerely,
Penny Leff, UC Small Farm Program agritourism coordinator

Sign up today - statewide summit November 4 California agritourism leaders to meet in Stockton



Will you help plan the future for California agritourism? The UC Small Farm Program and UC Cooperative Extension invite agritourism leaders from all over the state to strategize about building better support for



agritourism operators in California at a statewide summit to be held November 4 in Stockton.

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. The summit will include regional breakout sessions for networking, discussion and planning.

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 summit is designed for agritourism operators, agricultural, tourism and community development professionals, county staff and officials, and others involved in California agritourism. Registration is open. [Sign up online](#) or call Penny at (530) 752-7779.

[event flier](#) - please share
[event agenda](#)

This project is partially funded by Western SARE's Professional Development Program for California, with additional support from the Sierra Nevada Conservancy and the Delta Conservancy.



Agritourism training for farmers & ranchers

Three-session classes offered in Fresno & Glenn Counties



We're teaming up with UC Cooperative Extension farm advisors, County Farm Bureaus, and other partners to offer interactive and results-driven agritourism planning classes for farmers and ranchers in both the Central Sacramento Valley region and the Fresno/San Joaquin Valley region.

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 pioneering agritourism operators will share their own experiences and will be part of a supportive network of advisors as you plan and start your new enterprise.
- You will learn from experts in business planning, regulatory compliance, risk management, hospitality and cost-effective marketing, including social media.
- The hands-on, interactive class activities will guide you as you

assess your own farm or ranch for agritourism potential and develop your 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

Registration is open - Sign up today for either class series:

[Agritourism Intensive](#) in Glenn County

Dates: Wednesdays, Nov. 30, Jan. 18 and March 28

Times: 8:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. (followed by networking social)

Location: Glenn County Farm Bureau, 831 5th Street, Orland

Cost: \$25 for three-session course (\$30 after November 23)

[A Guide to Agritourism](#) in Fresno County

Dates: Thursday, Dec. 8, Wednesdays, Jan. 25 and March 14

Times: 8:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. (followed by networking social)

Location: Fresno County Farm Bureau, 1274 W. Hedges Ave, Fresno

Cost: \$25 for three-session course (\$30 after December 1)

For more information about either course: [Penny Leff](#), UC Small Farm Program, (530) 752-7779

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United States Department of Agriculture
National Institute of Food and Agriculture



Online agritourism course offers in-depth study Ten week course starts October 3

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](#). It would be great to meet some of you through this course, which involves lots of individual feedback and an online discussion forum.



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. Community development professionals and others who work with diversifying farmers and ranchers are especially welcome.

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!

Announcing: California Agricultural Almanac CalAgTour.org directory & calendar are linked to Almanac



The Small Farm Program is excited to introduce the [California Agricultural Almanac](#), which links our online agritourism directory and calendar to an interactive web-based mapping portal that for the first time brings together information on farming areas, crops, farms, markets and farm-related

events. The Almanac lets visitors find the regions where crops are produced, get details on crop seasons, discover farms, and find out about markets and agricultural events to participate in. If you are listed on CalAgTour.org, you are already part of the Almanac!

In this initial release, the Almanac has more crop detail for the San Francisco Bay Area - the same details will be added to other parts of the state in the coming months.

The Cal Ag Almanac draws data from partner agricultural agencies and organizations, including the UC Small Farm Program, to offer a fresh and comprehensive picture of California's remarkable agriculture. The Almanac has been developed by Sustainable Agriculture Education ([SAGE](#)) in collaboration with [GreenInfo Network](#) with funding from the California Department of Food and Agriculture's Specialty Crop Block Grant fund. Check it out and give us feedback! www.calagalmanac.com

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

Now that the directory is linked to the Cal Ag Almanac, more people than ever 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](#)!

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.

California Small Farm Conference Scholarships

Applications due December 16 for March 4 - 6 Conference



Join us March 4-6, 2012 in Valencia 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; (one of the short courses is an agritourism tour.) focused workshops; engaging keynote addresses and numerous networking opportunities.

Scholarship applications are now available. A robust [scholarship program](#) is one of the outstanding features of the California Small Farm Conference. Thanks in part to generous support from USDA Rural Development, scholarships are available to support the participation of eligible small-scale farmers, ranchers and their employees, students and certified farmers' market managers with limited means. CSFC is proud to have given almost 1,000 scholarships over the years and is committed to honoring the diversity which reflects California. Translations have been offered in Spanish, Hmong, Chinese and Somali. Arrangements can be made for hearing or sight impaired attendees. Scholarships are given to California residents only.

Other great resources

Educational opportunities in California and beyond

- 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.](#)

- Yosemite/Sequoia Resource Conservation and Development Council is offering a one-day [agritourism and nature tourism workshop](#) in Visalia (Tulare County) on November 12, as well as tours



of working agritourism operations in both Tulare County (November 15) and Fresno County (November 17).



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
UC Small Farm Program
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