



Agritourism Intensive 2012-2013 - Merced

Offered by UC Cooperative Extension and the UC ANR Small Farm Program in partnership with Merced Visitor Services and Merced Country Ventures

Course Syllabus

Course Overview

This course will introduce the student to the range of opportunities for diversifying a working farm or ranch by providing enjoyment and education to visitors for profit. Local experts will guide participants as they assess their own farms or ranches for agritourism potential and start creating business, risk management and marketing plans for their own agritourism operations. Local experienced agritourism operators will share their own experiences and will be part of a supportive network of advisors as class participants plan and start new enterprises.

Students will participate in individual exercises and will share their work during small-group discussions in class, and will have homework assignments to complete between the class sessions. The homework will include completing several assessment worksheets in cooperation with family or business partners, as well as writing first drafts of parts of their own business plans. Class instructors will provide each participant with individual feedback on all assignments turned in.

The participants will be encouraged to (but not required to) participate in group online discussions about the classes, readings and individual planning work.

Dates: Mondays, December 3, 2012 and January 7, 2013 and Tuesday, February 12, 2013
Times: 9:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m. each session (lunches included)
Location: UCCE Merced County, 2145 Wardrobe Avenue, Merced, CA 95341
Cost: \$50 for 3-session course
Information: Penny Leff, UC ANR Small Farm Program, paleff@ucdavis.edu, 530-752-7779

Course Outline

Session 1: Consider the possibilities and challenges – Monday December 3, 2012

8:30-9:00 **Registration/Continental Breakfast**

9:00-9:15 **Welcome /Overview of the workshop series**
Maxwell Norton, UCCE and Penny Leff, UC ANR Small Farm Program

9:15-10:15 **Successes in agritourism – Experienced operators tell their stories, discuss costs & benefits and start-up challenges, followed by Q&A**
Cindy Lashbrook, Riverdance Farm
Tony Azevedo, The Double T Ranch
Ty Shaeffer, Shaeffer Ranch
Stephanie Marchini, The Vista Ranch and Cellars

10:15 -10:30 **Break**

- 10:30-11:00 **Assessing your farm or ranch for agritourism potential**
Overview of assessment process
- 11:00 – 11:15 **Individual exercise** using worksheet to begin assessment
- 11:15-12:00 **Navigating the permitting and regulatory process**
Bill Nicholson, Merced County Planning Department
Vicki Jones, Merced County Environmental Health Specialist
- 12:00 – 12:30 **Lunch**
- 12:30 -1:30 **Legal liability and risk management strategies**
Rusty Rumley, National Agricultural Law Center
- 1:30 – 2:00 **Liability Insurance for agritourism**
Tom Murphy, Winton Ireland Strom & Green Insurance Agency
- 2:00 -2:15 **Checklists for assessing risk management on your farm or ranch**
Penny Leff, UC ANR Small Farm Program
- 2:15 -2:45 **Small group discussions to share preliminary ideas**
- 2:45 – 3:00 **Homework discussion and evaluation of today’s class**

Homework – due at beginning of next class:

- ❖ reading in text and supplemental reading,
- ❖ Complete assessment worksheets of participant’s own farm or ranch for agritourism potential, involving family members and partners in the process.
- ❖ Begin evaluation of the potential for several current or possible agritourism activities on participant’s farm or ranch.
- ❖ Complete risk assessment checklists for farm, ranch or agritourism operation

Session 2: Business Planning and understanding Hospitality - Monday January 7, 2013

- 8:30-9:00 **Sign in/Continental Breakfast**
- 9:00-9:10 **Welcome /Overview of the day**
Maxwell Norton, UCCE Merced County
Penny Leff, UC ANR Small Farm Program
- 9:10-9:30 **Small Group exercise** – share assessment of farm or ranch for agritourism potential and analysis of possible agritourism enterprises
Facilitator: Penny Leff, UC ANR Small Farm Program
- 9:30-10:30 **Introduction to business planning**
Kurt Clark, Alliance Small Business Development Center
Overview of planning process steps & resources
Discussion of mission statement, business concept, goals, objectives
Introduction to “One page business plan” exercise
- 10:30-10:45 **Break**
- 10:45-11:15 **Individual exercise** – Begin drafting mission statement, business concept, goals

- 11:15 -11:45 **Budgeting & cash flow**
Kurt Clark, Alliance Small Business Development Center
 Discussion of startup costs and budgeting projections
 Presentation of budgeting projection exercise
- 11:45 -12:15 **Individual exercise** – begin budgeting exercise, listing unknowns, startup costs
- 12:15 – 12:45 **Lunch**
- 12:45 - 2:00 **The hospitality business – finding, understanding, educating, and caring for visitors**
Karen Baker, Merced Visitor Services
Denise Skidmore, Hilmar Cheese Company
George and Patty Kapor, Paeo Lavender Farm,
- 2:00 - 2:30 **Small group exercise** – discuss challenges encountered so far in the process
- 2:30 – 2:45 **Report back** on major challenges so far and strategies for overcoming challenges
- 2:45 – 3:00 **Discuss homework, complete class evaluation**

Homework – due at beginning of next class:

- ❖ Complete first draft of “one page business plan”: mission statement, business concept, goals and objectives; complete first draft of first year budget.
- ❖ Consult with insurance agent, county planning department, and/or experienced agritourism operator

Session 3 – Market analysis and effective marketing – Tuesday, February 12, 2013

- 8:30-9:00 **Sign in/Continental Breakfast**
- 9:00-9:10 **Welcome /Overview of the day**
Maxwell Norton and Penny Leff
- 9:10-9:40 **Small Group exercise** – share and discuss any or all of the homework assignments
Facilitator: Penny Leff, UC ANR Small Farm Program
- 9:40-10:10 **Conducting a market analysis**
Jackie Lehman, Home Grown Cellars
- 10:10-10:25 **Break**
- 10:25-11:00 **Effective websites and social media for agritourism**
Karen Rice, Constant Contact
Michael Loschke, IMC Consulting
- 11:00 -11:30 **Creating a marketing strategy**
Michael Loschke, IMC Consulting
- 11:30 -12:00 **One hundred years of growing a farm stand**
Joe Zanger, Casa de Fruta, Hollister
- 12:00 – 12:30 **Lunch**
- 12:30 - 12:45 **Individual exercise:** draft outline of a marketing strategy
- 12:45 – 1:00 **Small group exercise:** share marketing strategy with each other

- 1:00 – 1:45 **Organizing a regional agritourism association** - working together for mutual success
Marian Rocha Zimmerly, Farms of Tuolumne County
Ben Cover, Cover's Apple Ranch, Farms of Tuolumne County
Susan Labozetta, Kris Casto, JJ Gillispie
Mariposa Agri-Nature Trail and "Weekend in the Country"
- 1:45 – 2:15 **Full group discussion** about agritourism association start-up, farm trail maps, collaborative events
- 2:15 -2:30 **Individual exercise:** Complete 6 month action plan
- 2:30 – 2:45 **Wrap-up and class evaluation**

This material is based upon work supported by USDA/NIFA under Award Number 2010-49200-06203.

