

**California Travel and Tourism Commission 5 Year
Rural Agritourism Strategic Plan
Interest in Rural California Study
Destination Analysts, Inc.**

To initiate discussion about rural California as a travel destination, study participants were asked about their general interest in visiting areas outside of the state's major cities. Even amongst those with lesser degrees of familiarity with California, strong interest in traveling to these areas was expressed. Not only do travelers feel that California's varied geography offers a spectrum of rural-associated experiences, these experiences are often seen as (or expected to be) truly unique and/or world-class. On top of that, many of these experiences are perceived to be reasonably accessible from one another ("You can ski in the morning and take a walk by a beach in the afternoon").

Given the appropriate positioning and marketing, there is significant opportunity to develop or generate further tourism to California's rural regions.

What Rural California Represents as a Travel Experience

The research explored what “rural” California means to travelers. The most important elements of how travelers perceive rural areas are:

- An absence of traffic and overwhelming crowds
- Intimate bed and breakfast inns
- A place where agriculture is the primary industry
- A scenic panorama of unique, natural beauty
- Friendly locals
- Abundant outdoor recreational opportunities
- Simple roads
- Historic sites
- A safe environment
- More affordable prices
- A comforting ambiance
- Tasty locally-owned restaurants

Participants also articulated deeply satisfying emotional benefits offered by a rural California travel experience, including:

- Peace
- Relaxation
- Freedom
- Movement

- Escape—from crowds, traffic, everyday annoyances and obligations
- Quiet
- Internal reflection
- Immersing oneself with nature's beauty
- Rejuvenation

Showcasing these much desired emotional benefits will be important in