

Notes from California Statewide Agritourism Summit group discussions, April 8, 2015

Prepared by Holly George and Penny Leff from notes recorded during breakout groups and full group discussions

The Statewide Agritourism Summit 2015, held in Woodland, was attended by more than 150 people, including agritourism operators, agritourism association representatives, tourism professionals, state and county staff and elected officials, agricultural educators, agricultural and community organization representatives and others involved in California agritourism.

In the morning, about 150 people attending the summit participated in **break-out groups by topic of interest**, picking from this list of topics:

- County permitting and regulations
- Association Development and sustainability
- Regional Tourism Connections
- Marketing and promotion opportunities
- Statewide advocacy and policy
- Liability, ADA and insurance
- Developing successful agritourism activities



To start, each person was asked to write down a **SUCCESS** relating to their topic of discussion. The list of **SUCCESSES** is available online here:

<http://sfp.ucdavis.edu/files/211556.pdf>

Each group was asked to first brainstorm **NEEDS** for improvement relating to their topic area, then to prioritize the top 3 to 5 needs. This is the summary of the report back from the groups about **NEEDS for improvement** relating to their topic area:

Planning/Regulations	Association Dev Sustainability	Regional Tourism Connections	Marketing Promotion	Statewide Advocacy Policy	Liability ADA Insurance	Successful Ag Tourism Activities
Organized re group for Ag Communication to County- Ag ombudsman	Succession Planning	ID Best points of contact & vendors to help w media relations & communications	Time-All volunteers	Define agritourism	Checklist of insurance requirements	Understand different forms of agriculture, ie: aquaculture, beginning, fruit/veggie/ livestock/crops, etc.
Integrated Collaborative work or Check lists/ roadmaps for process	Social Media Platform	Break boundaries Make connections to create alliances	Identify Target Markets	Special unit or advisory board on agritourism statewide	Common sense req for farms re: ADA, liability requirements	Cross industry collaboration bring industry groups together
Specify in General Plan & Consistent Supervisor Support once in GP	Raising Dollars	Develop inventory of agtourism opportunities that include seasonal interests and experiences	How to best reach the market(s)	Statewide policy on agritourism	Legislation reform to limit farm liability	Understanding target markets for opportunities
Resident Buy-In (no angry neighbors, stop supporting them)			A way to stay connected			Understand revenue potential of demand & draw to event
Inhibitive Zoning Code GP support needed			How to reach marketing consultants			Finding unique experiences
			Funding			Consumer questions
			Getting farmers to network, share collaborate			Farmers to understand revenue potential of agtourism
			Name recognition, regional branding marketing resources			Learn demand/draw for guests

Each group was next asked to brainstorm OPPORTUNITIES relating to their topic area, then to prioritize the top 3 to 5 opportunities. This is the summary of the report back from the groups about **OPPORTUNITIES** relating to their topic area:

Planning/Regulations	Association Develop Sustainability	Regional Tourism Connections	Marketing Promotion	Statewide Advocacy Policy	Liability ADA Insurance	Successful Ag Tourism Activities
Partnership and commitment on both sides policy & farmers	Use Successful Models for Ag-Nature Tourism Don't Recreate	Shared Marketing Web portal/switchboard	Partnering / Collaboration	Funds for food-based education CDFA SCBG	Self Insur program for agtourism liability	Education: Peer & Youth
Create forum/ open space for communication	ID Regional State National partners to provide Services	Build New Non-traditional alliances	Social Media	Educate public official on agtourism	Partner w ins companies to develop workable ins program	Who is In? Interest Base from Farmers
Ombudsman / Liaison	IF Funding Models	Improve policy options and channels	Hospitality Education	Create a statewide association	Educate ag operators on limiting liability	Social Media Traceability
Ag Biz Group 4 advocacy, support / Ombudsman		Create ag tourism advisory committee	Establish/ Strengthen relationships –Co, Public, Farmers			Cross Collaboration w Other Grps
Up-front EIR by County to allow Ag Tourism by right w standards			Work w other counties to share best practices			Search Engine Use & Social Media
Grants, sm biz finance, ag mitigation fees to help offset fees & costs			Attend CVB, Chamber, tourism mtgs			Familiarize Local People & Schools w Your Activities
			Expand farm trail / map opportunities			Create Activities that Extend Ag
						Form Association of a Variety of Farms
						Tie Local Roots/History to Events

Regional Breakout Groups:

In the afternoon group breakout sessions, about 130 people met in regional groups. The group sizes varied from 5 people to about 20 people, and the groups included regions of different sizes, due to the over-representation from near-by regions and under-representations from more distant regions at the summit. Each group was asked to select 3 to 5 of the OPPORTUNITIES identified in the morning that the group members felt were most important and most achievable for their region. Then, each group was asked to select one of these OPPORTUNITIES for a more in-depth brainstorm session, using a STARBURST format for beginning to flesh out aspects of the selected OPPORTUNITY. These are notes from the afternoon regional break-out groups about OPPORTUNITIES for their region, with the highlighted OPPORTUNITY followed by focused discussion:

North Mountains (Siskiyou, Modoc, Lassen, Plumas, Sierra, Nevada, Placer, El Dorado)

- Build new non-traditional education/collaboration non-profit
- Expand Farm Trail
 - o Information/education opportunities
- Hospitality education
 - o Training, customer service
- Advocacy, Support Ombudsman
- **Focus: Partnering/Collaboration with goal of finding Farm Ombudsman with shared funding from Non-Profits & Farm Bureau**

- o **County, public, farmers, non-profit**

Why – Leverage funding

- o Save time
- o Focus attention & energy

Who – Group, Farmers, Ranchers, public, customers, county, non-profit, **Farm Budsman**

What – Farm Budsman

- o Find and fund
- o Accountability

Where – Do we find – local, county, state: **Build upon resources/experiences in Marin, Sonoma and Yolo/Solano Counties that already have these positions so we can be most successful**

- o Yolo/Solano Program – Michelle Stephens
- o Marin Program – Lisa Bush
- o Sonoma Program- Karen Giovannini

People Interested in Staying in Touch

Co-Conveners: Jennifer Mantei and Jane Harris both from El Dorado County

Jane Roberti, Plumas County Mike Miller, Placer County

Jody Franklin, El Dorado County Ann Bullard, Plumas County

Mountains & Foothills: South/Central (Amador, Calaveras, Alpine, Tuolumne, Mono, Mariposa, Inyo)

- "Don't reinvent the wheel"

- Focus: Use Successful Models for Ag-Nature Tourism for Gold Country/Motherlode/High Sierra

Why – Workforce/employment cannot separate from Yosemite/Kings Cyn/Sequoia & Recreation 2.4 million visitors #3 magnet or Cabins-weekend

Who – Work with Emilyn Sheffield-Chico State, CSU, UCD Recreation Management Programs, Web/Data Mining

What – Successful/Existing Model "Destination" Scale Programs

How - **\$Show the Stats/data** Face to Face Events/Networking, repeating conference 'Rural Tourism' not funded, Workforce/Employment

Where – Columbia Cerro Coso Community College 'Events Venue', Mounmuth Yosemite

When – Next Funding Cycle is July 1, 2015

People Interested in Staying in Touch

Co-Conveners: Shelley Attix, Deputy Sector Navigator RHT Central

Barbara Steiner, Consultant/Watchable Wildlife

San Joaquin Valley (San Joaquin, Stanislaus, Merced, Madera, Fresno, Tulare, Kings, Kern)

- Hospitality education
- Educate peer to youth
- Work with CVB & Chamber of Commerce

- Focus: Collaboration with variety of farms and/or operators (regionally)

- o **Farm Trail & Farm map for Co. or regions**
- o **Policy actions & channels**
- o **Create a statewide Association**

Why – To get better in touch with community & raise awareness

Who – Operators in a 2-3 county areas

What – Organization or Association of a variety of farms or other operators

How – Using social media, web and other digital means of communication/marketing

Where – 2-3 county areas

When – Yesterday

People Interested in Staying in Touch

- Co-Conveners: Maxwell Norton, Merced County
- Phoebe Copp, Dairy Council (Fresno, Merced, Madera, San Benito, Mariposa, Kings, Tulare)

- Carla VanderHelm, Stanislaus County Sarah VanderHelm, Stanislaus County
- Brittany McMahan, Tulare County Bob McKeller, Tulare County
- Sarah Potter, Stanislaus County Karen Macedo, Stanislaus County
- Nori Naylor, Tulare County Deena Kirby, San Joaquin County

Sacramento Valley (Sacramento, Shasta, Tehama, Butte, Glenn, Yuba, Sutter, Colusa)

- Cross-collaboration with other groups
- Social media – build non-tradition
 - o Tie local roots & history to events

- Focus: Create ag tourism advisory committee in collaboration with other groups

Why – To mitigate issues, marketing, communication bridge, share best practices

Who – Operators, politicians, neighbors, adversaries, proponents, consumers, Farm Bureaus, Chambers, partners

What – Ag Ambassadors to represent AgTourism

How – Reach out to operators, **invite all to participate**

Where – Regional, North State, possibly multi-county

When – Immediately

People Interested in Staying in Touch

- Co-Conveners: Meghan Bishop, Yuba County Tim Neuharth, Sacramento County
- Laura Pedrozo, Glenn County Kevin Foley, Colusa County
- Tim Pedrozo, Glenn County Olivia Newsome-Grieco, Butte County

North Coast (Del Norte, Humboldt, Mendocino, Lake, Trinity, Sonoma, Marin, Napa)

- Up-front EIR process by right
- Ag-business group
- Grants, funding loans, esp for permitting
- Create Ag tourism advisory committee

- Focus: Build non-traditional and cross-county alliances, partnerships, collaboration

Why? – Don't recreate the wheel

- Combine resources
- Help facilitate permitting processes

Who? – Everyone!

- Farmers
- Govt
- Elected
- Interest groups
- Health orgs
- Sonoma State, Humboldt State Recreation Departments, Community Colleges
- Farm groups
- Farm bureau
- Non-profits

- Build consensus
- New ideas

- Food ed/schools
- 4H
- Arts
- Food/culinary
- Pot growers?
- Healthy eaters
- Chambers
- CAFF
- Ombudspersons

What? Group Website, Shared Resources, Outreach & Education, County Representatives

- Advocacy
- Representatives
- Website

- Library
- Education
- Shared resources

Where? Face to Face meetings and In the Cloud

- Senate?
- Local groups reporting out

How? Convene & continue conversation

When? – Meet quarterly at rotating counties with a field trip

People Interested in Staying in Touch

Co-Conveners: Karen Giovannini, Sonoma County
 Lisa Wilson, Lake
 Rachel Yeoh, Sonoma
 Sarah Darcey-Martin, Ag Institute of Marin County
 Shelly ? at Farm Tours

Karlene Rebich, Senator Mike McGuire’s Office
 Jane Riley, Sonoma
 Marissa LaMagna, Bay Area-focus Sonoma Co
 Dean Parsons, Sonoma County
 Carmen Synder, Sonoma Farm Trails

South Bay and Central Coast (San Mateo, Santa Cruz, Alameda, Santa Clara, Contra Costa, Monterey, San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara)

- **Focus: Partnerships & Relationships:** Partnership & commitment on both sides (policy & farmers); Establish/Strengthen Relationships Among County/Public/Farmers; Cross Collaboration with Other Groups

- Open space tours, recreational tours, nature tours

Who – Public, farmers, policymakers

- Recreational tourism
- Nature Tourism
- Foodie travelers
- Supervisors & Local Government
- Dept. of Ag, Planning Dept, Environmental Health

What – Robust Ag (or Food) Element in County General Plan

- Identify Ag Tourism in the General Plan
- Ag Overlays/Special District Designations and:Ag Easements

Where –

How – Central leader/Advocate such as a Farm/Ag Ombudsman

- Branding

Why – Burdensome planning process

People Interested in Staying in Touch

Co-Conveners: Lisa Bodrogi, Santa Barbara/SLO Counties

Penny Ellis, Santa Cruz County

Wayne Reeves, Contra Costa County

Carolyn Wooddall, SLO County

Lynette Sonne, SLO County

Patricia Davis, Santa Cruz County

Karen Alder, Contra Costa County

Barbara Frantz, Contra Costa County

Keri Brumfield, Contra Costa County

Peter Ruddock, Santa Clara County

Sabella Kraus, Alameda County

Solano County

Focus: Partnerships and Commitment (Both Policy and Farmers)

Why – Partnership/Communication Buy-In, Everyone has input and is heard
Consequences, Consensus (both ways), Compromise and Agreement

Who – Community Policy Makers, Associations eg: Suisan Growers Assoc, SS Farm Center, Fruit Growers Assoc, Landowners

What – Documentation to solidify what the plan/policy is

- **People Interested in Staying in Touch**

Co-Conveners: Possibly the Yolo County Land Trust?

Yolo County

- Government relations
- Social media

- Focus: Collaboration

- o County
- o Non-traditional

Why – Cast a bigger net, Diversity=Inclusion, Consistency of Theme, Coordination of Efforts, New Ventures=unique offerings, better yearlong show

Who – Yolo County Visitors Bureau

What –

How – **Master Calendar**, social media/web, Coordination to avoid conflicts OR Create Packages, Inventory and Survey

Where – Online, print pieces, certified folder, Visit CA Welcome Centers, SF Ferry Building, signature events, website, small reads

When – Year-round

- People Interested in Staying in Touch

Co-Conveners: Alan Humason, Yolo County Kristy Levings, Yolo County

South Coast & Inland Empire (Ventura, Los Angeles, San Bernardino, Riverside, Orange, San Diego, Imperial)

Focus: Develop Statewide Agritourism Association

Why – Informational Hub

Who – Representatives from all areas: gov't, big farms, small farms, agritourism partners

What – Centralized place for info gathering, standards/regulations, connections, info sharing

How – forming a website and membership based on dues

Where –

When –

- People Interested in Staying in Touch

Co-Conveners: no one stepped up for this task though the following are interested in the effort

Robert McBroom, Los Angeles County

Cathy McBroom, Los Angeles County

Shelli Riley, San Bernardino County

Devon Riley, San Bernardino County

Samantha Porter, Conejo Valley & Torrance

Debra Lucero, Butte County (facilitator)

Next Steps for California Agritourism?

For the final half hour of the California Statewide Agritourism Summit 2015, the entire group of attendees proposed next steps for the California agritourism community. The group agreed that the following goals would be beneficial, and the individuals named agreed to help organize action toward these goals:

- **Form a Statewide Agritourism Association**
 - Bring similar needs together
 - Communication within the industry and “a voice” for agritourism
 - Where to start? Who to go to? State association may be the “go-to”
 - Association could connect with regional efforts already in place
 - Association could build collaboration with partners on a statewide basis
 - People who agreed to move forward with this idea:
 - Robert McBroom, Pierce Farm Center, Los Angeles
 - Tim Pedrozo, Pedrozo Dairy, Glenn Co.
 - Devon Riley, Oak Glen Apple Growers, San Bernardino Co.
 - Lisa Bodrogi, Curvee Consulting, Santa Barbara Co.
- **Continue to develop connections with Visit California** to promote a variety of California agritourism operations
- **Agree on a standard definition of “agritourism”**
- **Develop “best practices/policies” of county general plan language and zoning ordinances** to share with county planning staff
 - Create presentation, connect and discuss with Association of county planners
 - Person who agreed to move forward with this idea:
 - Penny Leff, UC Small Farm Program
- **Organize “Fam Tours” of agritourism operations** in California for elected officials
 - Person who agreed to move forward with this idea:
 - Debra Lucero, Butte Co.
- **Connect with RCRC** – association of rural county supervisors
 - Person who agreed to move forward with this idea:
 - Jennifer Mantei, American River Conservancy, El Dorado Co.

- **Integrate agritourism into community college/career training/hospitality education**
 - Include High School career training
 - 4-H/FFA outreach
 - Ag in the Classroom growth
 - People who agreed to move forward with this idea:
 - Shelly Attix, CA Community Colleges, San Joaquin Co.
 - Mechelle Best, California State University Northridge, Los Angeles Co.
 - Marissa LaMagna, Bay Area Green Tours, Alameda Co
 - Rebecca Riley

- **Engage in statewide advocacy** for regulatory changes that benefit agritourism operators
 - Create a Senate Select Committee for agritourism
 - Advocate for Limited Liability Legislation for agritourism operations
 - People who are interested in moving forward with this idea:
 - Nori Naylor, Naylor's Organic Family Farm Stay, Tulare Co.
 - Farm Stay U.S. (national organization of farm stay operators)
 - Jamie Johansson, California Farm Bureau Federation (not present for the discussion, but had expressed interest earlier)
 - Karlene Rebich, aide to State Senator Mike McGuire