

## **Sonoma/Marin Regional Agritourism Summit Discussion Notes**

From group discussions at Summit, February 16, 2017

### **Small group: Regulatory Discussion**

- Needs
  - o Where to go to get answers?
    - What requires a permit?
    - Coastal-specific rules?
  - o Resources re: Succession planning
  - o Keeping regulations up to date with changes in the agritourism industry
    - Reach out to Board of Supervisors
    - CA Retail Food Safety Coalition
- Questions/Concerns
  - o Unequal regulations within coastal areas and outside coastal areas
  - o Choosing enterprises based on the rules that would affect them
  - o Getting the message from farms/ranches to regulators
  - o Overview of what's required
    - Resources: Both Marin and Sonoma Counties' Agricultural Ombudsmen

### **Small group: Discussing the realities of the food system with visitors/customers**

- Interests
  - o Food recovery
  - o Marketing dilemma: Sell as all rosy, or talk about real challenges?
  - o Food justice
  - o Worker justice
  - o Push tourism to manifest values of farms
  - o Helping connect food with people in need
- Educate
  - o As a society, we need to pay more for food
- Inspire
  - o Pretty pictures!
  - o Person based?
- Need a "term" to market our agritourism, perhaps "Sustainable Sonoma"
  - o Awareness raising
- Food recovery as a secondary marketing theme, not primary
- Need to consider the experience from the visitors' point of view
- "Community based" tourism
- Shift the story to positive side, like organic ag
- Agriculture justice project
  - o Social justice on family farms
  - o Advertise fair practices
- Three things to walk away from your farm knowing
  - o Inspire vs. educate
- Sustainability framework

- Local farm as your most direct food source
- Alternative local
- Community!
- Corporate bonding through gleaning

#### **Small group: Marketing Collaboration**

- Partner with like-minded businesses
- Deciding if agritourism is right for me (branding)
- “Live out the Experiences”
  - o Authentic experiences
- Having baby animals for visitors to meet, both in person and on websites, is a big draw!

#### **Final full-group discussion**

- Needs
  - o Marin County Farm Trails
  - o Better engagement with non-ag groups
  - o Positive marketing images and language
  - o Stay authentic and remember what visitors are expecting & are ready for
  - o Link to Ag Zones and what is/isn't allowed
  - o A public market in Sonoma/Marin
- Plans
  - o A new collaboration effort between Marin County Tourism and Sonoma County Tourism
    - Tim Zahner, Sonoma County Tourism will work with Vivien Straus, California Cheese Trail, on this effort.
  - o Improved marketing and customer relationship management (CRM)
  - o Sonoma Co. Farm Trails marketing workshop on Feb. 25
  - o Sonoma Co. Cooperative Extension upcoming workshops
    - Hops
    - Integrated production systems
    - Value added and Food Safety