

Yolo/Solano/Sacramento Regional Agritourism Summit Discussion Notes

From group discussions at Summit, February 13, 2017

Small group: Regulatory Discussion

- County regulations overview
 - o El Dorado County
 - Ranch Marketing Ordinance VERY specific
 - must meet standards
 - Ag comes first! – want ag as backbone of projects
 - can sell “by right”; events mostly require permits
 - o Sacramento
 - General Plan supports agritourism, but not a big push from farmers in Sac. County.
 - Urban agriculture ordinances just passed
 - Farm 2 Fork is good promotion program
 - o Nevada Co.
 - Winery ordinances being discussed and revised
 - o Solano Co.
 - Are people trying to get out of Williamson Act?
- Williamson Act
 - o Compatible Uses: Uses that won't compromise, displace or impair or lead to to the removal of adjacent land from agricultural use.
 - Any use must be consistent with the principles of compatibility
 - o Compatible uses can include:
 - Recreational uses
 - Open space
 - Agriculture
 - o Ag advisory committees are helpful
 - o Property owner should be aware of W.A. requirements
 - o W.A. oversight – who enforces?
 - Ag Commission plays a big role in some counties
 - Violation has penalties, remedies, legal recourse
- Single day events
 - o How can small events be regulated/permitted for smaller farms that only host one or two events a year?

Small Group: Social Media Marketing Training

- Three most important social media platforms are Facebook, Instagram, Twitter
 - o Free
 - o Large group of people quickly
 - o YOU manage content
- Facebook
 - o Authentic story; people can engage and connect
 - o Build support and community
 - o 4Cs: Connect, Communicate, Content, Commerce

- Use hashtags
- Add a “shop” to FB page to market/sell products
- Add logo “f” reminders to business cards and other marketing
- Use “analytics” to fine-tune
- Twitter
 - Reach people FAST – larger community
 - Hashtag!!!
- Instagram
 - Positive platform
 - Natural platform for food pics
 - HASHTAGS!!!! – use them
 - Videos
 - Makes everything look beautiful – use photo filters to amplify
 - Like other people’s photos
- Rhoma Designs – app for “poster” creation
 - Use on FB, other
 - Can send digitally to print too
 - Versatile, looks great, keeps marketing interesting
- Remind people on social media that you have a web page so they start going there regularly

Small group: Financing agritourism development

- Create membership organization – fee based
 - Pitfalls: farms vs. wineries
 - Challenge is to bridge the gap
- Grant support possibilities
 - USDA Local Food, Farmers’ Market Promotion Program
 - CDFA Specialty Crop Block Grant Program
 - Extensive reporting
 - Requirements are limiting
 - Funds only cover promotion, not “stuff”
- Land Trust funding
- County/City funding
- DMO/tourism partnerships
- Events and other fundraising programs
- Transient Occupancy Tax, Tourism Business Improvement District
- Crowd sourcing

Small group: Insurance, Liability and ADA

- Farm insurance policies are too narrow in scope for agritourism
 - Only cover home and farm business, commodity
 - Now with product form changing (grapes to wine for example) farm policy doesn’t cover
 - Commercial general liability policy needed
 - Premium based on receipts
 - Some insurance companies don’t cover ADA suits

- Blending ag and visitors' coverage is still hard to get underwriters for
- If charging for alcohol, then changes from a guest to a business activity, needs endorsement and added commercial liability policy
- With a farm policy and commercial liability, it is good to add an umbrella policy to extend over all policies
- ADA rules are often interpreted by county staff.
- Workers' Comp – required for employees, including volunteers
 - o Rate depends on employee's functions
 - o Don't have to be paid to be an employee

County group discussion: Solano County

- Needs
 - o Determine the needs of
 - Farmers
 - County
 - City
 - o New life for Solano Grown
- Opportunities
 - o Solano Grown; legal shell – bring back to use
 - o Agritourism committee getting organized
 - o Suisun Valley Partnership/Suisun Valley
- Plans
 - o Research other Solano Grown type organizations
 - Talk with remaining board members and re-seed board
 - o Agritourism committee strategic plan
 - o Speak with county Ag Commission

County group discussion: Yolo County

- Needs
 - o Clarity & balance in policy to address the diverse agritourism interests
 - o More events on farms leading to more structure for promotion
 - Vs. only Hoes Down Festival in October and Lavender Festival in June
 - o Coordination for smaller farm events
 - o Lodging – Capay Valley, Clarksburg
 - B&Bs?
- Opportunities
 - o Almond grower/UCD academics/culinary
 - Honey, wine
 - o Cyclists, link to destinations
 - o Cannabis – “smoke where it grows”?
 - Cultivation – support small farm diversification
- Challenges
 - o Wineries & farming vegetables
 - Timing, busy farmers

- Requirements for food preparation
 - On-farm facilities – bathrooms
 - Attracting people to the farm & region
 - Identifying the diverse audiences
 - Developing on-farm attractins
 - Building critical mass
 - Farmers: producing and marketing
- Successes
 - Road signage
 - Specific product marketing
 - Festivals
 - Partnering through non-profits, CSP, land conservation

County group discussion: All Other counties

- Integration of counties – what each has to offer
 - i.e. – Oroville Dam
- Pass through counties – promote that
- Which chambers, organizations are worth the partnerships... time & \$\$
- Marketing on your own
- Realistic expectations for different levels of agritourism
 - Entry, agritourism, and advanced agritourism
- Focusing on what needs are (may be small)
- Cohesion between entities
- Invite people into the interior
- Limited resources – time and money – follow through

Final full-group discussion

- Needs
 - Ability for counties to create policy that allows agritourism uses that are compatible with production agriculture.
 - Farmer and rancher commitment to agritourism development and awareness of the benefits of agritourism
 - Larger counties sharing the marketing of smaller counties' events, smaller counties providing info to larger counties
 - For example, through Farm to Fork
 - Invite them into the interior- share excitement, education, build awareness, peak peoples' curiosity
 - Be proactive
- Opportunities
 - Farm to Fork – coat-tail on that
 - Sacramento as one of the 10 healthiest cities
 - Biking, hiking, rafting
 - Bay area as a market opportunity
 - Educational events: rice, Pacific flyway

- Writers are OVER Farm to Fork
 - Be authentic, be special, talk about new places
- Next Steps
 - Regional approach is next step up
 - Cross county lines
 - Solano and Yolo CVBs intend to work together
 - Nevada County and partners did a survey of producers and will follow up on that