

Building a Farm Trail; Developing Effective Agritourism Associations

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Project Objective:

The development of effective and sustainable grower-based agritourism marketing associations

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Project Funder:

California Department of Food and
Agriculture Specialty Crop Block
Grant Program

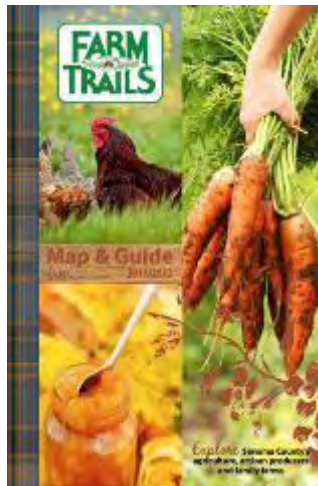


Project Background:

California agritourism is organized and promoted by a variety of county-based and local agritourism associations and destination marketing groups.

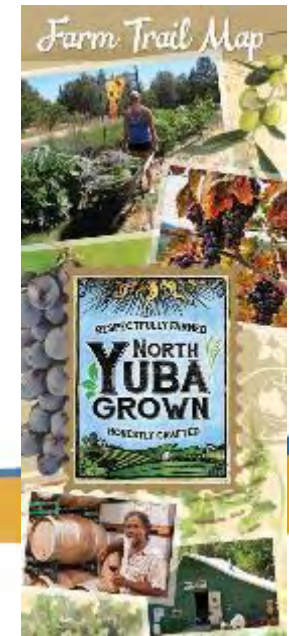
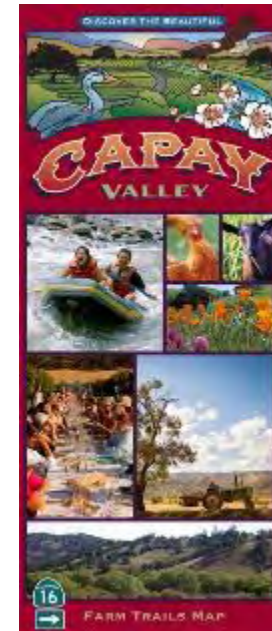


In a 2015 survey of California agritourism operators, farm or wine trails and agritourism associations were rated the most helpful among community resources.



Methods and activities

- Year 1 – Provided training and technical assistance, helping three new agritourism associations to:
 - Develop farm trail map brochures
 - Update and refresh websites
 - Organize collaborative public events
 - Plan for organizational sustainability



Methods: Contracted Consultants

- **Three consultants contracted to advise groups**
 - Butte County Economic Development and Marketing Professional
 - Yuba-Sutter Economic Development Professional
 - Developer of the California Cheese Trail map, website & app
- **All three worked as a team, helping all three groups**
 - Tour of each region, then meetings with each group
 - Consultants each focused on one primary aspect
 - Map brochure development
 - Website development and marketing
 - Organizational financing and sustainability



Contracted Graphic Designers & Website Designers work with stakeholder group committees



- Each group elected a lead committee
- Each committee requested bids and selected a graphic designer
- Project manager managed UC contracting with selected designers
- Committees worked with designer, consultants & project manager on map brochure and website content and design

Methods:

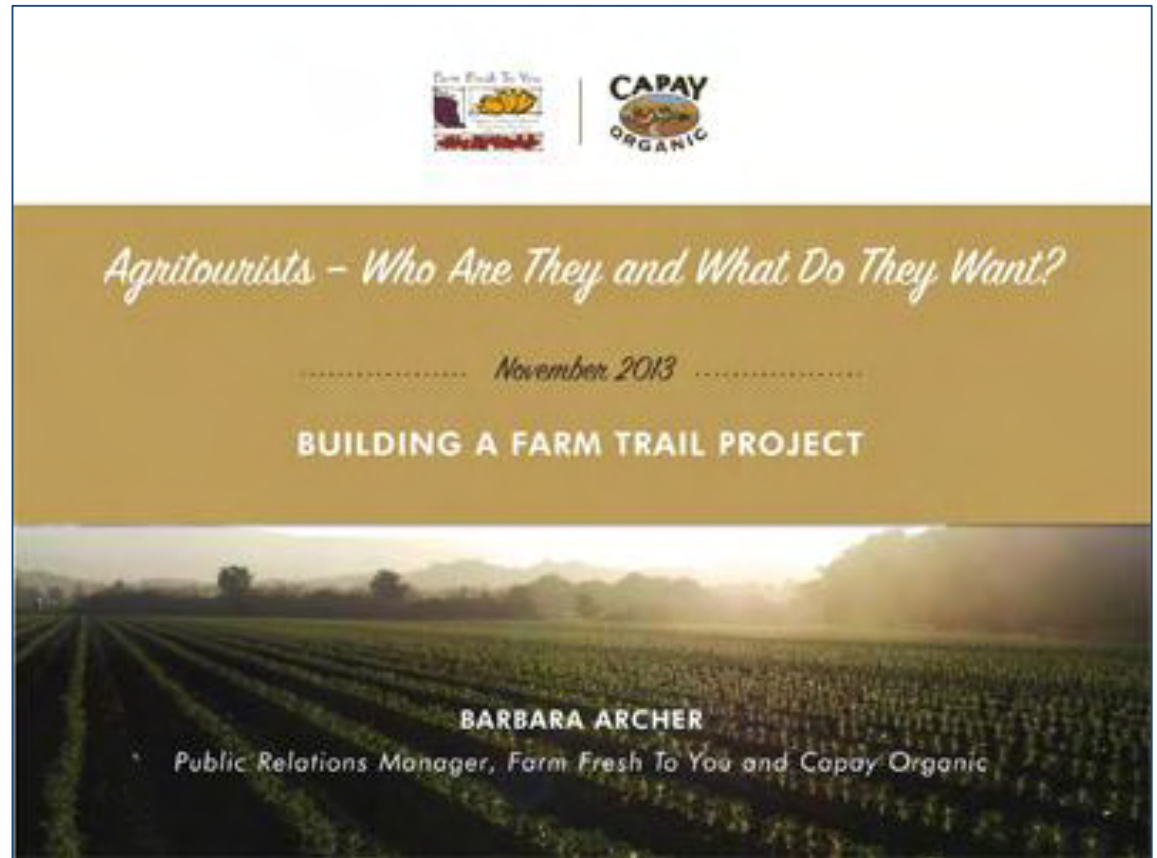
Project manager worked with each group to plan event



Methods:

Consultants and guest speakers guided groups in planning

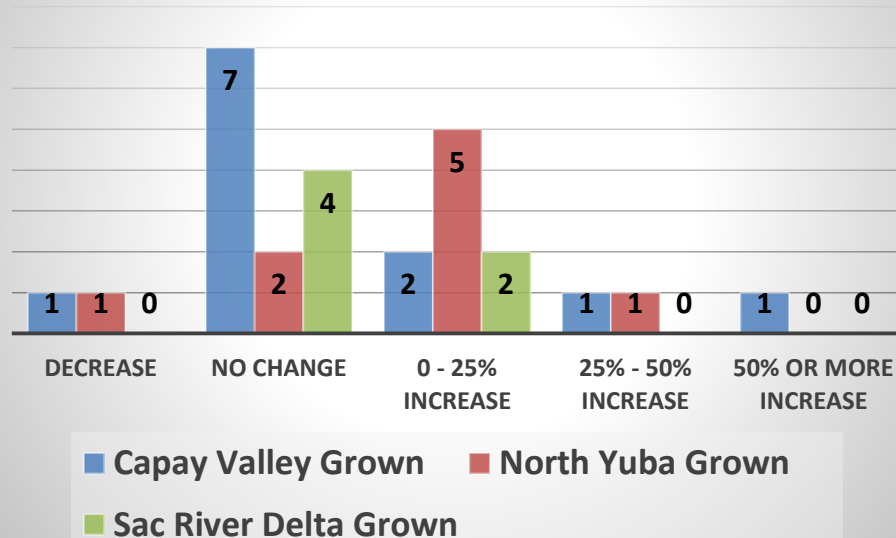
- Two workshops for all participants
 - Experienced agritourism leaders give presentations
 - Participant groups share experiences with each other
- Consultants meet with each group for marketing and organizational sustainability planning



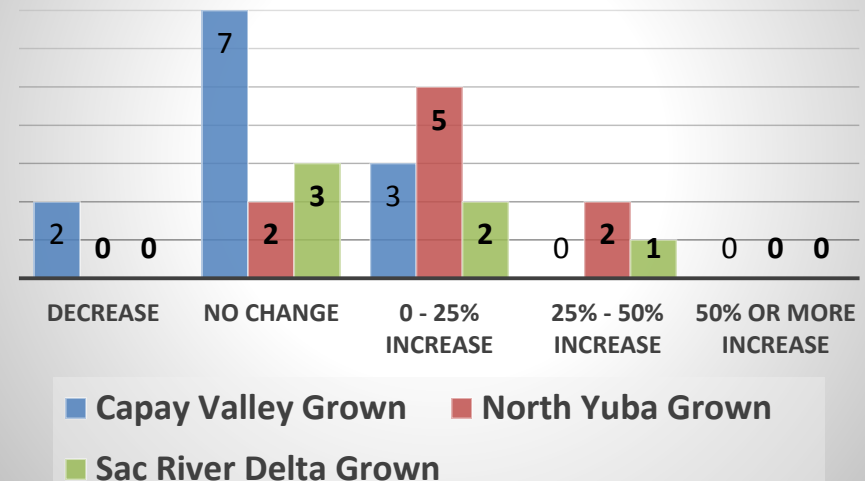
First Year results and evaluation

27 responses to a survey of the 73 specialty crop producer members of
Capay Valley Grown, North Yuba Grown and Sac River Delta Grown
(37% response rate)

Change in number of agritourism
visitors (by number of respondents)



Change in Agritourism Revenue
(by number of respondents)



First Year results and evaluation

Comments returned with evaluation survey:

- The Farm Trail maps have been well received by customers at my farmer's market booth.
- Too early to tell for the website, but the map and its promotion (e.g. open farm day, farmers market handouts) gave us many more personal contacts with customers or potential customers
- It's helped potential visitors locate the winery, and have a feel for where we are in relation to other towns in the North State
- The map is excellent in getting your farm recognized and remembered throughout the year.
- The program, as you can see from my answers above, hasn't impacted our business in any appreciable way.

One year later: groups' follow-through

- All three groups have maintained websites and Facebook pages
 - Sacramento River Delta Grown and Capay Valley Grown posting increasing number of events and updates on both website and Facebook
 - sacrivertdeltagrown.org/
 - capayvalleygrown.net/
 - www.northyubagrown.org/
- Sacramento River Delta group printed new version of map brochure for 2015
- All three groups organized collaborative events in 2015
- North Yuba Grown still struggling with identity and focus



Expanding the program statewide



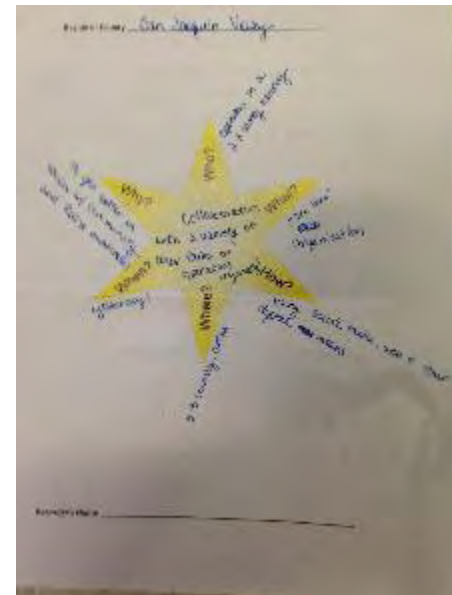
California Statewide Agritourism Summit

- Held April 8, 2015 in Woodland, near Sacramento
- More than 150 attendees
- **Theme and goals:**
 - Planning the Future of California Agritourism*
 - Developing a Framework for Communication, Collaboration and Advocacy*
- **Presentations:**
 - Successful regional agritourism marketing association
 - County collaborations for regulatory change & promotion
- **Breakout group discussions/planning sessions**
 - By area of interest*
 - By region*
- **Additional Sponsors:**

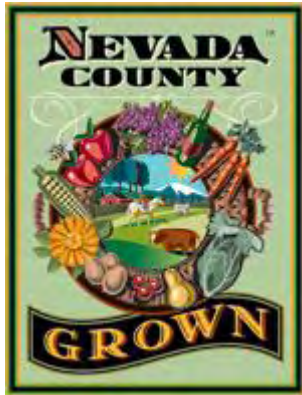


California Statewide Agritourism Summit

- Much enthusiastic discussion and planning
- Committees formed; volunteer conveners identified
- Very little follow-up after event



Interviews with Agritourism Association Leaders



- Leaders of 25 organizations contacted
- 20 responded & participated in telephone interviews lasting 20 minutes to 1 hour
- Goal was understanding of organizational goals, challenges, successes and activities
- Leaders offered advice for others
- Interviews compiled for on-line guide

Guide will soon be
available online at:

http://sfp.ucdavis.edu/events/Building_a_Farm_Trail_Project_2013_-_2015/

Marketing Regional Farms and Wineries

A Guide for California Agricultural Marketing Groups



UC
CE | University of California
Agriculture and Natural Resources

Marketing California Farms and Wineries: A Guide for Groups

- History of start-ups
- Group goals
- Organizational structure
- Membership
- Activities, marketing methods
- Challenges & advice



Advice from experienced group leaders:

On group goals:

- Have a common goal and don't go in too many directions

On organizational leadership:

- In forming a board, the personality of the board members and their passions can make you flourish or can kill the organization
- Don't underestimate the amount of time it takes to build the group's infrastructure

On membership participation:

- It's not about your farm trail making money. It's about the farms making money
- There will rarely be more than 15 percent of members who are active in promotions. Members will make it to 3 out of 10 meetings. Up to 60 percent will participate in events.
- The best way to assess the needs of members or learn about problems is through in-person discussions. Most won't respond to emails and surveys

More advice from experienced group leaders:

On maps and guides:

- Don't date the local guide in case you want to use it for multiple years
- Don't order more than you can get rid of before it is obsolete
- Every farm and business listed on the map should have a good supply to hand out

On Open Farm Day Tours:

- Keep the number of stops small – 5 seemed reasonable
- Let other members participate at the 5 or so selected sites
- Make it as easy as possible for farmer/participants
- Only feature businesses that are open regular hours – discourage “appointment only”
- **It is essential to understand and engage with the tourism program in your community**
 - **Partnerships and community support are key!**

Final Project Steps:

- Distribute link to online guide widely to California agritourism community
- In December, survey group leaders about usefulness of guide in increasing effectiveness and sustainability of the association



Thank you!

Questions?



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