

MEETING NOTES
Oregon Statewide Agritourism Working Group
Thursday, May 15, 2014, 1 pm-4 pm
Heathman Hotel, 1001 SW Broadway, Portland

Attendees:

Danielle Cowan, Clackamas County Tourism and Cultural Affairs
Melissa Fery, OSU Extension Service
Ann Forsthoefel, James Beard Public Market
Allison George, Washington County Visitors Association
Thomas Hogue, Oregon Department of Land Conservation and Development
Barb Iverson, Wooden Shoe Tulip Farm and Farm Bureau Officer
Scottie Jones, Leaping Lamb Farms/Farm Stay US
Marilyn Kosel, Wayward Winds Lavender Farm and Oregon Lavender Association
Sally McAleer, Travel Lane County
Stephanie Page, Oregon Department of Agriculture
David Perry, Zenger Farm
Erika Polmar, Plate and Pitchfork
Robert Reid, Reid on Travel
Craig Smith, Rural Development Initiatives
Mary Stewart, MARStewart Group, Clackamas County Agritourism
Blake Van Roekel, Get Dirty Farm Tours
Kara Wilson Anglin, Wilson Ranches B&B
Erik Wolf, World Food Travel Association

By phone:

Mary Stern, Yamhill County Commissioner and Association of Oregon Counties
Diane Wolfe, SAGE Center

Travel Oregon Staff:

Scott West, Chief Strategy Officer
Kristin Dahl, Director, Destination Development
Harry Dalgaard, Destination Development Specialist
Nastassja Pace, Destination Development Specialist
Holly Macfee, Vice President, Brand Strategy, Global Marketing
Lisa Itel, Global Sales, Manager
Linda Andrews, Destination Development Coordinator

Facilitator:

Kathi Jaworski, Write to Know

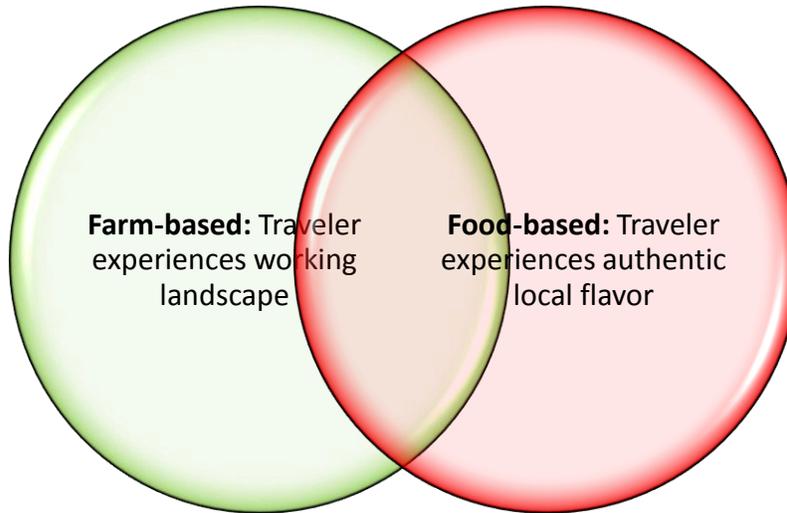
Recap discussion: What stands out in terms of information/reports discussed at the first meeting?

- Need for an agritourism definition
- Land use laws are a problem
- Way finding
- Gap between the tourism providers and the farmers
- Opportunity to work together
- The good work that's already going on and to leverage all existing assets
- Building reputation and brand
- Need for inventories
- Opportunity for itineraries

State of Agritourism in Oregon

Working Definition

Addressing the call for a clearer definition of agritourism to guide future efforts, and reflecting discussion at the last meeting, the facilitator proposed a *working definition* that would be inclusive of diverse traveler experiences. This simple diagram represents a collection of various food and farm-based experiences for visitors.



Generally, the group reacted positively to this simplification, with the following key discussion points:

- More than farm products count as food-based experiences- for example, fish is an authentic local food
- More than food counts as farm-based experience e.g. horseback riding on farms
- We are talking about value-added to raw product as part of the experience
- There is a sizable overlap between culinary and agritourism, so we are using the working term “culinary/agricultural tourism” as an umbrella term for now
- Gray areas we will continue to sort out, while trying to be inclusive as possible here in the organizing stage.
 - Agritourism refers to visitor experiences, not to the whole agricultural sector and its products-
 - So an off-farm purchase of a farm product a few steps removed from the actual producer (e.g. buying a Pendleton blanket from a downtown Portland retailer made with wool from an Oregon farm) is not necessarily agritourism, though it does contain agricultural product
 - While wanting to be inclusive, it is also important to be authentic and to not “greenwash” agritourism—e.g. by including products and services that have only a nominal, small connection to local products. E.g. a processed food with a tiny amount of Oregon grown/caught ingredients; a farm without meaningful food/fiber/plant production.
 - Another important aspect of agritourism is the personal connection established between the visitor and the producer, though may be a gray area. Example question: say I’m taking a trip and rafting on a river, viewing the ranches, and eating the food from the ranch, but not directly on the ranch and meeting the producer... am I doing agritourism?
 - Scale of operation may be a factor that limits the personal connection, limits the % of local produced inputs, or increases regulatory responses
- Additional points stimulated by the definition discussion
 - Agreement that lack of lodging is a serious barrier to agritourism in rural areas, because visitors design trips around places to stay.

- Given the state’s regulatory framework for land use, expanding accommodations on farm land is one of the toughest nuts to crack
 - On farm retail is also highly regulated.
- Definition conversation suggests that a certification process for what ends up under the Oregon Agritourism brand would be a useful future project (like Vermont has), e.g one criteria could be if percentage of revenue directly benefiting an Oregon based farm/ranch comprises over 50% of total sales
- Could adopt Clackamas County’s six categories of agritourism to give more shape to specific goals and strategies. Compatible with the simple definition.
 - Farm and Ranch recreation
 - Educational experiences
 - Agri-tainment
 - Hospitality
 - On-farm direct sales
 - Off-farm direct sales

Additional market information/trends, update from Governor’s Tourism Conference Agritourism session

See presentation slides from meeting on Work Group web page.

Draft Vision for Agritourism in 2025

Based on the small group notes that follow, this is a *rough draft* vision for Agritourism in 2025, which, when revised as needed and adopted in June, will serve as the guide for selecting priority goals and strategies.

“As a result of expanded culinary/agritourism development in Oregon, the state’s diverse working landscapes are a valued source of economic vitality. Small scale family businesses prevail and prosper, and younger generations are able to continue to work the land. Innovative farm, ranch, and food entrepreneurs are well-supported in developing high quality products and services for visitors, which generate vital supplemental income to sustain their operations. Neighbors and host communities support and benefit from this activity.

Oregon visitors find diverse, accessible and high quality opportunities to experience excellent food and bountiful landscape throughout the state, rural and urban. With clear wayfinding and coordinated marketing, it’s easy to explore regions, and to connect culinary/agritourism experiences with other nearby visitor experiences. More visitors stay overnight at culinary/agritourism destinations in a network of high quality, uniquely Oregon lodging facilities. Through these experiences, they gain an authentic glimpse of the state’s beauty, heritage, flavors, cultures, values and people. Once home, they retain personal connections with Oregon through sustained friendships and product purchases. Oregon is recognized as a world-class destination for interesting, educational, fun and life-changing food and farm-based experiences.

The success of culinary/agritourism brings increased prosperity to Oregon communities large and small. Downtowns are revitalized as a result of increased visitor spending, as well as increased local purchasing by residents who have a renewed sense of pride and support for local producers. There are diverse new opportunities for tourism entrepreneurs. The increased focus on quality food builds strong regional food systems, ensuring that in this bountiful landscape, everyone knows where their food comes from, and no Oregonians go hungry. As rural-urban interdependence grows, the rural-urban divide in Oregon disappears.”

Full notes from Small Group Discussion of 2025 Vision

	Group 1	Group 2	Group 3
<i>What is different about farms and ranches?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Farms have the actual opportunity to participate and develop agritourism opportunities • Policy and legislative and liability issues are solved <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Not operating in fear ○ Right to farm is held up in more instances • Farms are economically sustainable <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Additional Revenue sources ○ A varied revenue stream • A thriving and viable sector of the farming economy • Farms are working in a collaborative fashion <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Farms are employing more people 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • With additional income by adding these agritourism activities, farmers will have a neater/cleaner presentation. • Better wayfinding signage to farms, on/around farms • Stronger urban farm connection – farmers actually communicate and advertise where the product is from • Higher percentage of farms to the urban growth boundary • More women-owned operations • More young people can stay and work on the farm • More lodging on farms • Farmers/ranchers have a higher level of understanding and skills in hospitality (cleanliness, hosting, customer service, marketing, running a good agritourism businesses) • Support is there for those farmers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Training sessions – classes (like through Extension) ○ Funding – start-up capital, line-item in the state budget (in CO there is some mechanism when there are left over funds those can go towards agritourism). ○ Would be nice if the source wasn't grant-based. • Signage • Peaceful coexistence between rural landowners and those fostering agritourism activities • Symbiotic relationship between farms hosting agritourismo and the local community (and schools who can develop work force at a younger age) – community • All laws/regulations at city, county, state and federal levels are supportive of agritourism business niche • Family-owned, locally owned farms remain a viable industries and are even more thriving than they are now– small farming is seen as a viable industry • Large corporations are turned away at state borders! 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Families stays on farms over the generations because they are economically viable • As generations stay on farms, farms must grow • Relationship between ranches and farms so we can connect visitors within the industry • Ensuring the visitor has the opportunity to connect with other experiences and products that end up helping farms/ranches collaborate and cross-pollinate • Upping the percentage of revenue that is allowed on your farm/ranch from other places from 25% to 50%. • Connected agritourism network of thriving farms kept in the family
<i>What is different about the visitor experience?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a vibrant farm stay economy functioning • Visitors will be cognizant of the vertical integration <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Visitors will understand 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More coherent experience provided by the farmer so the visitor can have a consistent, high-quality experience. • Quality insurance programming is in place – criteria is set, farmers/ranchers trained so it's a consistent • Farmers/ranchers are in compliance and understanding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Network of branded, beautiful way finding signs to connect visitors to agritourism experiences • More sellable product – a network of agritourism around the state – so can

	<p>the full life cycle of a product</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communities feature a higher rate of local produce and products • There is a strong integration between Recreation and Agritourism Opportunities • Signage is consistent and of high quality • The experience is well refined and experience providers are customer service focused. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group transportation options exist to visit these areas • Visitor experience is accessible through tour companies / guides • Less traffic, more visitation • Visitors have access to locations throughout the state • Visitor is experienced by more festivals – and more awareness of existing homespun festivals • Easier discoverability of experience opportunities • More continuity of experiences between local culture, outdoor recreation, culinary/agritourism • It's affordable, accessible to many socio-economic levels • Visitors can easily access east of the Cascades (currently transportation options are limited to that part of the state) -- rural air taxi, passenger train • We solve the transportation issue – flying becomes a regular form of transportation for the public and visitors 	<p>easily plug into itineraries.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agritourism work hand and hand with existing and future campaigns so that they go deeper and stay longer... connecting agritourism to existing infrastructure to enhance the visitor experience and increases economic vitality • Visitor experience is impactful – they know that their visitation is impacting the community/local area positively
<p><i>What is different about life in Oregon communities?</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are more farmers/more people employed by farming/ranching • Respect of neighbors engaged in Agritourism is the norm • There has been a culture shift to a stronger food system <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ More people are buying CSA's ○ More people are reliant on local ag produce • Farmers are including value added products in farmers markets and at retail levels • Everyone acknowledges and respects the value of Agritourism as an economic engine 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More economically viable and more resilient rural communities • Storefronts are open in rural • Rural food deserts don't exist/rural communities have access to local products • More businesses in that town because of increased agritourism • Diversity of industry and products wherever you are so you have back-up • We have the lowest Type II Diabetes in our population – public health is positively impacted • Local population is much more aware of our local roots in agriculture – newcomers and youth are educated • Urban farms and green spaces are protected • Portland UGB doesn't change at all • 25% of produce consumed locally is from local sources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agritourism is driving vibrant, viable rural communities... both economically and visually, while allowing areas remaining authentic and true to place • Rural communities robust with infrastructure and technology to allow high-paying jobs, attracting talent, visitors and locals to connect and plug in, and a way for businesses to grow with high speed internet and up-to-date POS and operating systems • Quality of life • One Oregon – a deeper appreciation for using all Oregon products, to support each other • Sustainability as a tool for growth for farms, so land can remain workable • Not one Oregonian is left hungry

Biggest take-aways from vision conversation as reported by each individual participant:

- Succession planning, so to ensure farms are still here and in the family
- Small farms are predominant / more family farms
- Visitors drawn deeper into Oregon, staying longer; Very different experiences between Eastern Oregon and the Valley
- Rural communities and farms and urban areas will have a greater interaction and interdependence
- Vibrant farms and communities that are owned and controlled by families that provide opportunity for youth and younger families, so they can stay on the farm
- Communities are transformed from looking like they are on the brink of extinction to vibrant, beautiful places with flowers and goats (!)
- Opportunities for visitors experiences to be impactful and to know it – and know what they are doing for Oregon and its people, showing that multiplier effect and the real story
- Not one hungry Oregonian
- Wealth of unique farm stay lodging options
- People in communities are buying local and supporting each other and understating the importance of that
- Neighbors are happy about all this!
- Process for generating revenue streams is easy
- Farmers and ranchers can truly operate in a legal agritourism businesses that have/add revenue
- Farms, groups, communities are all working in collaboration
- Every student in Oregon visits a farm at some point! And even gets dirty on a farm
- We are the destination that comes to top of mind when people think about agritourism in the US and food
- Presentation of our farms of our ranches and farms are professional and clean and they know what hospitality is and are educated and trained
- Peaceful co-existence between agritourism operations and neighboring farms that aren't
- Better transportation opportunities and infrastructure and connectivity in rural areas to not just only drive cars and add more CO2 to the existing problem
- Agritourism leads to revitalization of rural downtowns and leads to new businesses
- More of a seamless connection between agritourism, culinary, recreation, arts etc so that the visitor can find it all – a beautiful, branded network of way finding signs
- Getting rid of rural food deserts -- these places have wealth of food and fish, etc being extracted but then can't find it there in the place to buy/eat for locals and visitors alike
- Products ready for sale, a way to make money and experiences monetized

Initial Brainstorm: Five Year Goals (2020)

A goal statement should represent a change that one wishes to see during the specified time period, for which some measure of that change can be established. Based on small group discussion, the following (with some slight wording changes) were suggested as promising top priorities, to be refined at the next Working Group meeting in June. The page that follows contains *all* draft goals generated during the small group discussions.

We have an innovative and successful regulatory policy framework to foster agritourism business development and positive economic community impact/Develop consistency in regulations and liability laws across the state Possible measures include: increased revenue across many small businesses due to supplementary agritourism activities, increased income levels of small businesses owners in the agritourism sector, increase in # of new agritourism businesses
Dedicated funding (fed, state, foundations) exists to foster agritourism business development, both capital and operations
A signage and wayfinding plan makes Oregon's food and farm-based experiences more accessible Possible measure- Increase in the % of visitors who plant to participate in Oregon agritourism and actually do so.
The market visibility of Oregon's food and farm-based experiences is increased through a focused website and App
A firm definition of Oregon Agritourism Product is established, including potential certification criteria/Increased connections developed between culinary and agritourism products
Five Oregon communities are revitalized due to agritourism
All elementary schools in Oregon have curriculum about where food comes from

Full notes from Small Group Discussion of 2020 Goals

Group 1	Group 2	Group 3
<p>Increase farm stays in Oregon by 10% / year (currently in 2014 there are 30)- Could be camping, house, trailer, b&b Increase the number of options (diversity) of the types of farm stays- From everything from luxury to rustic We have an innovative and successful regulatory policy framework to foster agritourism business development and positive economic community impact Increased revenue across many small businesses due to supplementary agritourism activities Increased income levels of small businesses owners in the agritourism sector, Increase in # of new agritourism businesses Increase in diversity of business owners More inclusive process to create equal access to: Small business has access to capital Increase in businesses who have received a certificate from an endorsed training program (20 graduates per year) Business training, Advocacy training to support these broader goals Increase the average length of stay by visitors by 50% (> 3 day average now) A plan exists to increase connectivity for the visitor experience to have better access to rural experiences (or experiences off the I-5 corridor) Increase in interconnectivity between experiences so once hooked into the agritourism experience you can find others Increase of local products in visitor experiences Dedicated funding (fed, state, foundations) exists to foster agritourism business development – capital and operations (currently wine, beer, metals, technology, outdoor gear manufacturers, aerial drones...but not agritourism) Dedicated funding for a statewide agritourism association exists Equalize the power of the wine industry so all agritourism businesses are afforded the same opportunities Strategy – use Yamhill to emulate best practices Strategies A state fund exists to help grow these ag and culinary businesses – requirement to go through a certain level of training/course work Create the training program- measure types of businesses participating Incentives Developing web content showcasing all of this</p>	<p>A signage and wayfinding plan is implemented A website and App for Agritourism experiences has been developed Develop consistency in regulations and liability laws across the state A firm definition of Oregon Agritourism Product is dialed Criteria is well established Increased connections between culinary and agritourism products Increase the sellable and marketable product Tax credits for local products State institutions buy local agricultural products Connections between farmer, processors, and end products are well established Farms have more diversified enterprises Agricultural brands have developed tourism specific products All Oregon Counties are engaged –full engagement 10 year goal is to lower the amount distressed communities through Agritourism opportunities Strong Local labeling has been adopted by producers</p>	<p>Operations already doing agritourism increase their direct sales. Because have seen that as more agritourism operations increase, the direct sales decrease. There is no percentage limit on taxes that agritourism can get added value income Within 5 years Oregon improves it's ranking for agritourism as a national destination Each of the DMO's have a featured segment on agritourism offerings on their website and it feeds to ORB/TO.com Highlight existing agritourism businesses better 5 Oregon communities are revitalized due to agritourism Increase in number of local agritourism groups and education workshops to connect all the pieces and foster better collaboration Fewer litigation against farms Agritourism and non-agritourism neighbors are happy Increase the percentage of visitors that come to Oregon and plan to participate in agritourism to the actual participating in agritourism, as that number was different (like 15% off) Strategy ideas ODA Grant for facilities and way finding signage Mobile App like Yelp that pulls all places near you and events – all agritourism related More in depth survey to see more of the why that the 52% of those people that were interested in the culinary class – only 12% are doing it. What's the issue here?</p>

Next steps:

The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, June 5th from 1-4 at the Food Innovation Center in Portland.

The agenda will include:

- Reviewing and adopting a vision for 2025
- Refining the goals for 2020
 - Change we want to see, and how to measure it
- Identifying and prioritizing top 3-5 strategies for the next 2 years
 - What we will do (ensuring there is a verb)
- Recommending best way to organize/structure coordination around these strategies going forward, recognizing that it will be a collaborative effort vs. a Travel Oregon-driven project
- Who is missing from our table, especially given the priority strategies?

Homework:

- Review the notes and come prepared to suggest clarifications and improvements.
 - Is the draft vision compelling?
 - Are the draft goals clear and can we measure progress? Are some of these goals actually strategies?
 - There are a few strategies identified during the discussion of goals. What stands out for you as actionable and likely to lead to the goals being accomplished? What other strategies, if any, should be considered?
- Are there key stakeholders we should be engaging NOW?