

# Growing Food & Farm Trails for Thriving Rural Communities

Oregonians have a unique love for our locally-grown food and we love to share it with our visitors. But that love doesn't stop on our plates. It extends into the agriculture all around us. Hear how some of Oregon's taste-makers and trendsetters are shaping the culinary experience into an agritourism experience as well. Learn how your business, organization and community can tap into food and farm trail development and how entrepreneurship is strengthening Oregon's food system. You'll need to leave your fork at the door.

## KEY TAKEAWAYS

1. **Consider the visitor experience first** – by putting yourself in the visitor's shoes, think about how you would weave experiences together so that your business/region is a destination with a critical mass of food and/or farm.
2. **Consider the business “portfolio”** - Define the trail criteria. This component is a frequently overlooked step during initial trail development. It is critical to consider ahead of time rather than working backwards. Find producers and businesses that fit.
3. **Engagement on the trail is dynamic** - with great outreach comes greater involvement but it's important to have the right experiences included.
4. **Connectivity is key** - From the supplier and small business angle, these loops are an introduction to get business owners to think of themselves as part of something bigger, cross promote and connect regionally.
5. **Start out with small, inexpensively produced maps or brochures** that allow for easy additions and corrections. Final format should depend on the physical space that suppliers have to distribute.
6. Encourage the locations on the trail to have **more value-added products available** for sale. This helps business participants see a stronger, measurable economic impact. Also, visitors enjoy having a story to tell with the product. •
7. Food and Farm trails are appealing to visitors for more than just the visit – they value that this a **community organized experience**. This is a collaborative visitor experience that gives them a deeper look into agriculture, food producers, and the bounty of Oregon.
8. Suppliers like farm trails because they allow them to **test the tourism waters** to see how deep they want to dive.
9. **Engage the chambers and other DMOs** during the product development design and development – in addition to that essential buy-in, they have insight that is incredibly valuable
10. Consider **who will own and manage this process**. Once you have a farm trail product, it's important to have some sort of structure to keep everything going.

## OPPORTUNITIES

- [Oregon Cheese Trails](#)
- [Cove-Union Farm Loop](#)
- [Whisky & Rocks Farm Loop](#)
- [Wild Rivers Coast Farm Trail](#)

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