



Concurrent Sessions Tuesday, November 8, 2005

Twelve topics will be covered during four concurrent sessions. Participants will choose one of three topics for each session. The topics are designated as “beginner” or “advanced” to indicate suggested experience level of participants. The topics offered during each of the four concurrent sessions are listed below.

Concurrent Session I

<p><i>Good to Go! - Getting to Yes with Agritourism</i> <i>(Beginner)</i></p>	<p>Eric Barrett, Ohio State University Extension Educator and Agritourism Enterprise Operator</p>	<p>Start up is difficult in any new business venture. It is even more difficult for farm operations that aren't used to dealing with the public. There are lots of ideas and lots of talking - but when are you 'good to go' on the idea? This session will overview agritourism opportunities, ways to get the farm team ready and other ideas for a good start up that will help with farm profitability.</p>
<p><i>Making Your Web Site Work For You</i> <i>(Advanced)</i></p>	<p>John Toman, UT Institute of Agriculture Director of Information Technology</p>	<p>Why just put up an average site, when you could put up a site that really enhances your business. This session explores how to make a website work to your advantage. Learn how to plan your site by focusing on users' needs, discover pointers on how to make your site come up in searches, and explore how best practices in web design can enhance "the look" of your site. This session will be helpful if you're considering developing a website or making improvements to an existing site.</p>
<p><i>Cultivate Revenue through Excellent Customer Service</i> <i>(Beginner/Advanced)</i></p>	<p>Ramay Winchester, Tennessee Department of Economic and Community Development, Economic Development Specialist</p>	<p>Your bottom line depends on your ability to meet customers' needs and expectations, and customers expect excellent customer service. Excellent customer service will help you to cultivate loyal customers who return again and again to your operation as well as grow positive word-of-mouth advertising. Poor customer service, on the other hand, will likely have a devastating impact on your crop of customers. This session will introduce fundamental customer service guidelines which can be implemented on your operation and provide tips on how to motivate all staff and employees to provide excellent service to your customers. Join in this session to learn how to cultivate your farm revenue through excellent customer service!</p>

Concurrent Session II

<p><i>Making Teachers Love Your Farm!</i></p> <p><i>(Advanced)</i></p>	<p>Eric Barrett, Ohio State University Extension Educator and Agritourism Enterprise Operator</p>	<p>School tours can be a profitable aspect of agritourism, but they are even more important in marketing other aspects of your farming operation if well planned and executed. We will discover curriculum ideas relating to your current activities; simple activities that teachers see as good for their lesson plans over the school year; the logistics of scheduling and hosting; marketing materials for schools, preschools and more! Learn to make school tours profitable for your pocket and for childrens' minds!</p>
<p><i>Evaluating Your Resources: A Snapshot of Your Potential</i></p> <p><i>(Beginner)</i></p>	<p>Alan Galloway, UT Extension Area Farm Management Specialist</p>	<p>Agritourism, for some, is an opportunity to increase farm revenue. Development of a successful enterprise, however, requires a unique combination of resources. In this session, you will learn about some of the resources needed and methods to evaluate your resources to help you determine your potential for success. These methods may also be helpful in deciding whether or not to add an attraction or expand your enterprise to other seasons.</p>
<p><i>Unwritten Rules of Success: Integrating Entrepreneurship and Business Planning in Agritourism Enterprise Management</i></p> <p><i>(Beginner/Advanced)</i></p>	<p>Rob Holland and Amanda Ziehl, UT Center for Profitable Agriculture Specialists</p>	<p>This is not your typical business planning seminar. This session will address the importance of entrepreneurship skills in the overall management of numerous, overlapping activities involved with operating a value-added farm enterprise. Participants will be introduced to the importance of establishing a vision and appropriately integrating numerous managerial functions involved in operating a new farm enterprise. Participants will look beyond production-oriented management and will be asked to consider some of the nontraditional factors of business success. Rather than looking at things that do and do not work, this session will focus on why some things work in some instances for certain operations. This session will focus on how business planning and management can help the agritourism entrepreneur develop an intuition for knowing which steps to take and when to take them.</p>

Concurrent Session III

<p><i>Marketing for the Marketing-Impaired!</i></p> <p><i>(Beginner/Advanced)</i></p>	<p>Charlie Hall, UT Extension Professor</p>	<p>In this breakout session, we will explore the mindset of successful "marketeers" -- what makes them stand out among all the rest! If you have struggled with getting a handle on your agritourism marketing efforts, then this session is for you! You will not only leave with many creative ideas in your head, but with a solid game plan as well.</p>
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<p><i>The Realities of Agritourism</i></p> <p><i>(Beginner)</i></p>	<p>Jerri Lynn Sims, UT Extension Area Farm Management Specialist & Panel of Agritourism Operators</p>	<p>You've seen the lines of people waiting to enter the corn maze in the next county or seen the school buses parked in your neighbor's yard. Is agritourism really just one big CASH cow waiting to be milked? You'll hear about the realities of agritourism from a panel of experienced agritourism entrepreneurs. Learn what it takes to be an agritourism entrepreneur and whether agritourism is as easy as it looks from across the fence.</p>
<p><i>Safety and Health: Regulations and Experiences of Agritourism Operators</i></p> <p><i>(Beginner/Advanced)</i></p>	<p>Timothy G. Prather, UT Extension Safety Specialist</p>	<p>Safety and health are topics often overlooked - often until injuries, illnesses, or other complaints occur. In addition to the obvious direct losses from mishaps (downtime and medical costs), incidents that result in injuries and illnesses can lead to costly investigations, fines, and litigation. Many farmers may be unfamiliar with these regulations because family farm production enterprises are exempt from most, but making the transition to an agritourism/retail enterprise suddenly makes the business subject to various federal and state safety and health regulations. This session will review some of these regulations, highlight several agritourism operations' experiences with these regulations, and discuss steps you can take to minimize the losses that can result from oversights and mishaps.</p>

Concurrent Session IV

<p><i>Creating Strategic Alliances That Pay! Do you have what a potential sponsor wants?</i></p> <p><i>(Advanced)</i></p>	<p>Darren Schmall, Pizza Farm Agritainment Company and Barbara Tanimoto-Schmall, American Heart Association</p>	<p>Darren and Barbara have created a successful sponsorship program for their farm with local, state and national companies (nearly \$50,000 in cash/in-kind in 2005). Are you overlooking a valuable asset on your farm? Learn how to select, solicit and retain sponsors. Creativity abounds in this simple, easy to follow template for creating a win-win situation for you AND your sponsors.</p>
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<p><i>Financing Your Enterprise: The Secrets to Grants and Loans</i></p> <p><i>(Beginner)</i></p>	<p>Amanda Ziehl, UT Center for Profitable Agriculture Specialist</p>	<p>Have you ever wondered if there was a special grant or loan program available to help finance your agritourism operation? This session will address the realities about the availability and requirements of grant and loan programs. To better prepare for securing financing for a new farm enterprise, participants will become familiar with terminology, matching and reimbursement requirements and myths and facts of grant and loan programs. This session will explain the importance of a business plan in securing financing, consider technical resources available and provide an overview of grant and loan opportunities.</p>
<p><i>Pumpkins & Print, Tomatoes & TV</i></p> <p><i>(Beginner/Advanced)</i></p>	<p>Patricia McDaniels, Doug Edlund, and Chuck Denney, UT Institute of Agriculture, Department of Marketing and Communications Services</p>	<p>“I’ve got a great business and terrific products, but nobody knows I’m here!” That’s a common concern among people in the Agritourism business. You can advertise, and that’s almost always a smart thing to do. But what if funds are limited? In this session, communications experts with UT’s Institute of Agriculture will talk about attracting free media coverage through news events and feature stories. Agritourism is news, and this session will focus on the types of stories the media might be interested in, and how to let the media know about your business. Any media coverage, whether it’s CNN or your local, weekly newspaper, means that someone, somewhere is learning about your agritourism enterprise. And increased knowledge with the public can lead to more customers! Learn to work with the media to attract attention to your business. Bring your story ideas and we’ll help you outline a reasonable approach for use with media.</p>