

Opportunities for Travel Oregon to Promote Quality Agritourism Development

Phase I: Initial Scan and Next Step Recommendations

October 2012

I. Summary Findings

If agritourism business development is a priority for Travel Oregon, there are **many partners with whom to partner on marketing and technical assistance** programs, and evidence from other states that investment in agritourism generates economic return. Readiness and partner capacity varies across counties and regions, so it makes sense to start piloting a concerted agritourism development strategy in one or more areas with a base of demonstrated commitment and experience. There are several such areas identified within this report.

Working solely from the bottom-up on marketing and business development programs for agritourism will not be enough to affect the broader risks and regulatory barriers (land use, health, liability, etc) in Oregon's unstable and highly variable policy environment from county to county. Except for environmental advocates, farm bureaus, and wineries, the stakeholders for agritourism are not well organized.

The state agencies that one might expect to have the greatest interest in agritourism— Agriculture, Land Conservation and Development, and to a lesser extent, Business Development—are lukewarm in their pursuit of agritourism-related policy reform. Thus, **if supportive agritourism policy development is a priority for Travel Oregon, it may need to take a leadership role in organizing stakeholders and providing policy development support.**

Statewide agritourism development models from elsewhere reflect quite varying organizational structures and strategies that reflect the differences in starting points and capacity in place. Given the current landscape here, **potential next steps for Travel Oregon** can borrow from what's been learned elsewhere, to include:

- Marketing support for agritourism businesses (such as improved Travel Oregon website presence)
- Marketing support for RDMO and DMO regional promotional efforts
- Organizing support (for association-based leadership)
- Agritourism business ombudsman/troubleshooter
- Other agritourism business development assistance
- Regional pilot with one county
- Regional pilot with more than one county
- Policy brokering
- Policy leadership

Most important is that Travel Oregon determine which roles it is potentially willing and able to take on. **For many but not all of these possibilities, a key next step is to convene stakeholders with an interest in expanding agritourism** (many of whom were interviewed for this report) to further advise on gaps, resources and leadership that could serve as a foundation for Travel Oregon's next steps.

II. Purpose and Focus:

What is agritourism? The California Small Farm Center provides a useful definition that is consistent with many other places: **agritourism refers to “a business conducted by farmers or ranchers on their working agricultural or horticultural operation for the enjoyment and education of visitors. It is intended to promote farm products and generate additional farm income, in the process of providing visitors with entertainment, recreation, participation and education”.**

Given the diversity of stakeholders for land development and farmland protection policy, Oregon has had an on-again off-again relationship with agritourism as a tourism or economic development policy. **This report is intended to advise the Destination Development Department of Travel Oregon about how to best catalyze and promote quality agritourism development throughout the state in the current policy environment.** In recognition of the Department’s limited resources, as well as the many active agencies and stakeholders already working in the agritourism arena in Oregon, these recommendations focus on concrete next steps that build on complementary efforts.

The recommendations in this report are based on the following information sources:

- Phone interviews with a small sample group of Oregon agritourism stakeholders to identify current activities, common issues and potential areas of opportunity for Travel Oregon to add value
- Review of key recent legislative, advocacy and planning reports related to agritourism in Oregon.
- Extensive review of published information from agritourism initiatives throughout the United States and abroad with an eye toward surfacing relevant models and lessons for Oregon
- Attending the first statewide Agritourism Summit in California, the culmination of much model work by the University of California at Davis’ Small Farm Program
- Participating in a working group organized by the Small Farms Program at Oregon State University Cooperative Extension, to plan a two-part Agritourism Summit for 2012-2013. Part One of the summit drew over 150 attendees, mostly farmers. More information about this event is noted below.

There have been two particularly challenging aspects to developing a concise report for the Department. First, there is an enormous amount of web-based information about agritourism initiatives both here and abroad. The Secondly, the legal and regulatory environment for agritourism activities in Oregon is in great flux right now, as recent changes to the state land use code filter down in various degrees to county land use codes. Thus, the information is purposefully presented in outline form, for ease of review and refinement of ideas.

Part III of this report summarizes **existing agritourism related work in Oregon**. Part IV provides an **overview of potentially useful approaches from outside Oregon**. Finally, Part V offers **specific action steps and choices for the Department to consider and prioritize** in consultation with a broader group of stakeholders.

III. Current Agritourism Related Activities, Challenges and Opportunities in Oregon

There has been **much legislative activity related to agritourism and direct farm marketing in the last two legislative sessions**, including:

- HB3280- amended state land use code in August 2011 to expand the allowable activities on vineyards of 15 acres or more that are located in exclusive farm use (EFU) lands. This replaced the temporary SB 1055 passed in a special 2010 legislative session: it was due to sunset at the end of 2012. Many provisions of HB-3280 will automatically sunset in two years unless renewed or updated.
 - A subset of larger wineries are allowed to have full service restaurants on site, and existing sites that meet the requirements of the code have grandfathered approval. This is one of the more controversial aspects of the bill.
 - According to Steve McCoy, Farm and Forest Staff Attorney at 1000 Friends of Oregon, the wine industry is not united in its support of these land use code changes. The divided opinion does not break down between small vs. large wineries, but rather those who wish to focus primarily on winemaking as opposed to general tourism.
- **SB 960- also amended the state land use code in June 2011, allowing counties a choice of amending their codes to issue several new types of conditional use permits for agritourism or other commercial events/activities that are “incidental and supportive to existing farm use.”** This bill reflects many recommendations from the Association of Oregon Counties’ 2010 [“Farmland Activities Task Force Report”](#), and is considered **clearer and more widely supported than HB3280.**
 - Most conflicts between traditional farm uses and emerging activities were reported by county planners in the Willamette Valley and urban areas. In Eastern Oregon, much less of an issue given lower market pressures/population.
 - Several counties, including Deschutes and Marion, have already incorporated these changes into county code. There is **no single organization tracking which counties are at what stage of code development related to agritourism.**
- HB2336- exempts certain types of food processing from the requirement of being made in a commercial kitchen.
 - The Oregon Farmers Market Association was a strong proponent and Oregon

There are several other **statewide/scale projects related to agritourism** worth noting:

- In 2011, 1000 Friends of Oregon launched [“The New Face of Farming”](#) initiative, including a series of listening sessions around the state to look at how the state’s land use laws could better support farming. Agri-tourism was discussed in the context of conversation around what types of commercial activities should or should not be permitted on farms. There were varied opinions across the state: the only common denominator was a shared interest in seeing farming and directly related activities as the primary use of farmland. 1000 Friends is not planning additional follow up work immediately from this report: they are actively monitoring county level implementation of HB3260 and SB960 and resultant development impacts.
- In May, the Oregon Farm Bureau sponsored a stand-alone agritourism development workshop in Woodburn, featuring a model of business planning for fee-based activity on private lands (e.g. hunting, fishing etc) from Mississippi State University. Additional sponsors included OSU Extension, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, among others. The Oregon Farm Bureau is a nonprofit membership organization established in 1932 to represent farm and ranching interests. With

32 county-level affiliates covering all the state's counties, it is also part of a national federation of Farm Bureaus.

- Melissa Fery of the [Small Farms Program at Oregon State University Cooperative Extension Service](#) convened a small group to explore planning an agritourism summit, including:
 - Mary Stewart, former Executive Director of the Oregon Agri-Business Council and primary author of the Clackamas County Master Agritourism Plan referenced above
 - Scottie Jones, owner of Leaping Lambs FarmStay in Alsea and founder of the national farm stay association, FarmStay US
 - Susan Labozetta, Arts/Agritourism consultant from Josephine County
 - Myself, unofficially representing Travel Oregon

Part I of the two part Summit took place on November 30 in Corvallis. The focus on Part I was practical advice and inspiration for current and potential agribusiness entrepreneurs. Part II, planned for March 1 immediately after the annual Small Farms Program conference, will focus on policymakers and agency leaders and building agreement on specific actions that can facilitate quality agritourism. It will be open to participants from Part I as well. As noted in the “recommendations” section, there is an opportunity for Travel Oregon to shape the Part II agenda and lay the groundwork for an effective summit through key pre-meetings.

- Will be using prototypical case studies at Part II and problem solve how various activities (home stays, use of outbuildings, food service, working on collaborative products and services across county borders) could be feasible in various locations. I am developing the prototype case study for the collaborative products and services case study)
- The North American Direct Farm Marketing Association is holding its [annual conference in Portland on February 1-6, 2013](#). John Zielinski, owner of Salem-based EZ Orchard Farm Market and Farm Bureau member, advocated for the group to come to the Pacific Northwest. While the target audience is not directly focused on agritourism (EZ Orchard Market, for example, primarily draws its customers from the local market), there may be particular sessions of interest and/or important stakeholders to engage.
- The Oregon Economic Development Association is focusing on food processing at its October 2012 conference in Pendleton. A post-session meeting organized by Oregon Business Development Officer Erik Andersson focused on economic development in wine country. This is potentially an immediate opportunity for Travel Oregon to engage new stakeholders in the economic development community.
- Travel Oregon's culinary tourism development, including the Oregon Bounty marketing campaign, is clearly relevant and supportive statewide initiatives! The Scenic Bikeway development work is also surfacing links between riding and agritourism related products and service development opportunities along bikeway routes.
- The following organizations no longer appear to be active in agritourism.
 - The Oregon Agri-Business Council does not seem to be actively engaged in agritourism development or promotion efforts at this time. This is the organization that developed the [“Oregon Agritourism Workbook”](#) in 2003, though the document is no longer available on the Agri-business Council's website.

- The Portland State University-based Institute for Culture and Ecology, which applied unsuccessfully last year for USDA funds to provide training and technical assistance to farm stay operators, is no longer in business.

There are several **county or regional projects** specifically aimed at addressing regulatory issues conflicting goals/interpretations of allowable uses on EFU land, including for agritourism. These include:

- 2009 [Yamhill County Agribusiness Economic and Community Development Plan](#): Despite an abundance of high quality wineries, winery visitors, and retail wine sales of wine, the plan found that **Yamhill County** lags similar areas in terms of its wine industry generating broader positive economic impacts. Lack of sufficient lodging and infrastructure constraints, especially related to water, are two key reasons.
 - The plan includes analysis of regulatory feasibility of several “prototypical” agritourism projects.
- **2012 Master Plan for Agritourism Development in Clackamas County**: hard copy available, but not yet published online (MARStewart Group, Consultant):
 - Includes comprehensive information about agritourism market trends, including national reports on economic impact of agritourism
 - Clackamas County has also supported the organization and promotion of several agritourism loop tours.
 - Excellent analysis of local regulatory and compliance issues and strategies to address.
- **Jackson, Josephine and Douglas County**: Governor Kitzhaber signed an Executive Order in May 2012 directing the Oregon Department of Land Conservation and Development (DLCD) to work with the counties on a regional approach to study, map, and potentially redefine farm and forest land. This project is due to be complete in 2014.
- DLCD is currently sponsoring an “Economic Opportunity Analysis” planning project in the **Milton-Freewater area of Umatilla County** just south of Walla Walla, Washington, with a specific focus on supporting wine industry related opportunities, including agritourism, along a main transportation corridor.

There are other regional initiatives related to agritourism that don’t specifically have a land use focus. They include, for example:

- **Wallowa County** continues to move forward on the agritourism development activities begun through Travel Oregon’s inaugural Rural Tourism Studio pilot program in 2009. Growing out of an RTS-associated “Ag Fam Tour” to introduce farmers, value added processors, tourism businesses and interested community leaders to each other around agritourism development opportunities, the Northeast Oregon Economic Development District continues to promote networking among agritourism operators, and between existing and potential new operators to grow and link new products and services.
 - Nonprofit Wallowa Resources is no longer active in agritourism development (Miller). Liability insurance for camps and tours became increasingly costly, and operating costs were too high to cover once initial grant funding was expended.
- [Oregon Country Trails](#) is a membership organization that has won a number of community development awards since its inception in 2005. It supports the organization of member based tour routes that are

now in six counties: Lane, Linn, Benton, Lincoln, Deschutes and Crook. The website does not appear to have been updated in the past year however.

- There are many regional organizations working on food systems development, with implicit or explicit ties to agritourism. “Gorge Grown” in the Columbia River Gorge is an example of a regional initiative that may share key stakeholders with future agritourism development work.
- [Farm Stay US](#), a national network of farm stay properties, is based in Alsea and managed by founder Scottie Jones of Leaping Lamb Farm.
- The **Small Farm Program at OSU** is increasing its focus on agritourism, as per this July 2012 publication and its leadership in hosting the Agritourism Summit referenced above.
 - http://smallfarms.oregonstate.edu/sites/default/files/diversifying_agricultural_activities_in_rural_zones.pdf
- Leaders in the newest Rural Tourism Studio region, River Canyon Country (Prineville, Madras, Warm Springs, Terrebonne area of Central Oregon), have prioritized agritourism as a focus for their RTS destination development work.

In terms of **common issues, challenges and opportunities**, these are the observations from interviews:

- **Cultivating agritourism entrepreneurs:**
 - It is difficult to involve existing agricultural businesses in exploring agritourism. Interviewees perceived that the “typical” agritourism entrepreneur is someone who earned their money somewhere else (in some other industry) and acquires farm property specifically to incorporate Agritourism into their business plan (e.g. Willow Springs Guest Ranch, Cascade Alpacas of Oregon).
 - Several reasons why it is hard to engage farmers in new agritourism opportunities—including lack of financial capital, perceived regulatory nightmare but also traditional values/culture that value hospitality not as a commodity to be sold but as a way to live. (Anglin, Miller)
 - Country Fairs as a place to reach farmers with information about agritourism opportunities (Anglin)
 - Appealing to note agritourism as an opportunity to educate people about stewardship and the care that farmers and ranchers give to the environment
 - A peer mentor network could be very helpful (Betts)
 - **Liability insurance** is very expensive and increasingly hard to get as agents stop issuing policies. Especially a problem for new activities on private land e.g. new guest ranches. Organizing as an LLC does not fully protect entrepreneurs. Potential for enhancing liability protection through cooperative legal structures should be explored—**North Carolina has model legislation**.
 - Because much state land use policy is interpreted and codified at the county level, there is **great variation from one county to the next in terms of the level of support/regulatory process for establishing or expanding an agritourism venture**. There is no central statewide resource to guide entrepreneurs through this sector’s specialized processes and troubleshoot as appropriate.

- **Policy support**

- The large scale of some events and even direct marketing operations, especially at harvest time, turns off even proponents of land use reforms to allow such intensive activity.
 - Wineries are a critical and lucrative part of agritourism, but also at odds with other agritourism stakeholders (some farms, environmental organizations, and even each other) regarding appropriate land use regulations on EFU land. Yamhill County is an epicenter for these tensions.
 - **Expensive permitting for single events relative to multiple events on same property, as well as very different fees from one county to the next.** Disincentive to distributing farm based events across many farms in diverse locations, such as the dinner series that Farm to Fork organizes. Easier to keep doing the same thing in the same location. (Domingo)
 - Farm to table events draw tourists. While most tickets are bought by Oregonians, they typically bring guests from out of the area. Of the typical four person party- 2-3 people are not locals. (Domingo)
- The **policy definition of commercial activity on farm land that is “incidental”, “supportive of” and “related to” primary farm operations is full of gray areas.**
 - Deschutes county treats the two through different permitting processes
 - Regarding on farm sales, Sauvie Island congestion is an example people fear, but it is a special case, because it is so close to major population area with major limitations on transportation access.
 - DLCD is working with Governors office to clarify and potentially loosen restrictions for commercial activity on farm and forest lands.
- Some agritourism land uses are more controversial than others. Steve McCoy of 1000 Friends ranks them as follows from least to most controversial:
 - Educational tours
 - On farm direct sales
 - Value added processing of farm products
 - Lodging, especially if food served
 - Events
- Lack of lodging in rural areas is a major constraint on tourism development in rural areas, affecting the ability to capture overnight visitors from nearby urban areas and to organize multi-day loop tours in more remote areas.
 - Do land use laws make it impossible to get the scale of operation needed for business viability, especially around lodging? For example, **is the current limit of 9 rooms for a B and B the right number?** (Hogue).
 - As another example, a **quirk of state land use policy permits separate guest accommodation structures on ranches, but that same activity is prohibited on the west side** (Daniels)
 - DLCD actively participated in a pilot Baker County effort several years ago to develop a regional multi-purpose trail network with one goal being to develop **policy exceptions**

to allow additional lodging on remote EFU and forest land to make the trail a more complete tourism product. (Daniels) Need update on current status.

- **ODLCD and ODA have some, but limited interest in promoting agritourism due to perceived conflicts with farm protection goals/advocacy groups.** There are advocates “for agritourism *within each Department for “legitimate” farms vs. “hobby” farms but it is unclear how much influence they have to influence agency policy.*
- DLCD less sympathetic to new owner who wants flexible treatment under land use code to create new agritourism destination as opposed to helping an operating farm that’s trying to diversify (Hogue).
 - Dept of Agriculture would favor reaching out to existing farmers vs. trying to cultivate new startups on farmland as well. (Pearmine)
- Oregon Department of Agriculture working with Oregon Dept of Health to make food service permitting and inspections more efficient and less confusing. This was a recommendation of the AOC report as well.

There is strong interest on behalf of the interviewees in participating in joint efforts to make quality agritourism opportunities for *legitimate farms* (a term used by several interviewees) legal and financially feasible for operators while supporting outstanding, authentic visitor experiences and economically vibrant communities. Section V, “Action Recommendations” includes specific recommendations as to how.

IV. Lessons from Outside Oregon

Although pro-active development of agritourism has a much longer history in other countries than here in North America, a number of states and regions have implemented agritourism development programs over the past decade with relevance for Oregon. A comparative summary of all the specific approaches could fill a book, so key highlights are reported here. As part of the Phase I work, I have gathered and catalogued additional background information on many other examples that can be used to further inform strategy.

Types of agritourism support activities include:

- Marketing Support- most common across states even if nothing else done
- Business Development- California and Washington emphasize this. Both have published agritourism guidebooks that are similar (though state specific) to Oregon’s original version produced in 2003.
 - Oklahoma has a **network of agritourism specialist advisors/troubleshooters.**
 - Washington state recently hosted an Agritourism Summit, primarily focused on nuts and bolts business development advice for existing and prospective agritourism operators: <http://uwsfr.files.wordpress.com/2012/11/agritourism-conference2.pdf>
 - North Dakota has a very new agritourism program, but it does offer grants for agritourism business start up or expansion through its state Department of Commerce. [British Columbia](#) has a foundation-funded **business funding portal for agritourism operators.**
- Business certification- British Columbia and Italy have initiatives to promulgate broad based standards for agritourism operators and certifying operations. [British Columbia’s is industry driven](#) (although it is not clear if the program is still operational), while Italy’s is public sector driven (national and regional)

with industry association partnerships. The Clackamas County Master Plan for Agritourism includes a two page summary of Italy's 25 year old agritourism initiative. I did not find similar examples in the U.S.

- Network Convening- this is a strong emphasis in North Carolina and also historically in British Columbia
- Research- North Carolina, California and Missouri have done a great deal in this area.
- Advocacy- North Carolina is particularly active in this arena (landmark liability and signage legislation). The [National Agricultural Law Center maintains a state-by-state compilation of "state agritourism statutes"](#) as a reference.
- **Destination Development- this is the least common strategy.** Tennessee has a regional trail development system that features agritourism and cultural/heritage tourism attractions: <http://www.tnvacation.com/agritourism/>. Vermont has a newly created "DIG in Vermont" agritourism marketing portal that actively solicits and features regional trails: <http://www.diginvt.com/trails/>. The Vermont portal content can also be easily sorted by region and activity type.

Agritourism development programs spring from many different types of starting organizational structures.

- A common pattern is for a state agency to convene an initial organizing committee with the goal of spinning it off as a business led organization. Hawaii is an example of this. Typically, Departments of Commerce/Economic Development or Agriculture play a lead role in convening, with Tourism less common.
- In some states, the program is managed long term by a state agency or point person. In North Carolina, even though the initial agritourism development effort results in a spin off network association, there is still an agritourism office within the state Department of Agriculture. Key roles include supporting and convening the industry network, while remaining directly involved with legislative strategy.
- Some states have a formal collaboration between state agencies to develop agritourism. For example, [Oklahoma's program](#) is a joint initiative of the Depts of Agriculture; Food and Forestry; and Tourism and Recreation Development. Kentucky has an intriguing organizational structure to support agritourism: **an agritourism staff person within the Department of Agriculture, with a formal (legislatively created) advisory council for agritourism that represents many stakeholders from the public and private sectors. This is very similar to the Oregon Scenic Bikeways Advisory Committee concept.**
- In some states, the resulting organization is a nonprofit with strong agritourism business involvement in governance: typically either a 501c3 (public benefit nonprofit which can receive tax deductible contributions, 501c4 (which has fewer lobbying restrictions) or a business association 501 c6 (Chambers are usually in this category). [Vermont Farms Association](#) is an example.
- Cooperatives are less common and typically focused geographically or on a subsector e.g. [Apple Hill Growers](#) in California.
- The Extension Service/Land grant university often houses agritourism programs, especially associated with Small Farm programs ([California is a prime example](#)) or a university department. California's program started with a series of outreach workshops in 1997, a web site in 2000, an agritourism handbook in 2002, and additional publications until the first state agritourism coordinator was hired in 2009. Thus, developing a robust program like California's is not an overnight success story!

Some of the largest state agritourism programs received substantial start up funding from USDA, including Oklahoma, Arkansas, Tennessee and California. These programs evolved differently, but all had essential seed funds for initial outreach, organizing and convening, research and education.

Just as it has proven to be for bicycle tourism in Oregon, research is an important ongoing support activity for sector development. Interesting examples include:

- North Carolina's study of the impact of agritourism activities on individual farm profitability: <http://www.ncsu.edu/tourismextension/news/documents/2012PiedmontFarmSchoolhandouts.pdf>. Missouri commissioned a similar study.
- California's profile of agritourism operators- activities, issues, profitability: <http://californiaagriculture.ucanr.org/landingpage.cfm?article=ca.v065n02p57&fulltext=yes>
- Big culinary/agri-tourism planning study commissioned in Nova Scotia; later critiqued for not leading to action: Interesting research project, perhaps best as an example of a too ambitious research agenda! <http://torc.linkbc.ca/torc/downs1/Nova%20Scotia%20Culinary%20Tourism%20and%20Agri-Tourism%20Sector%20Study.pdf>

V. Next Steps for Action

Travel Oregon recently unearthed an undated report called "A Fresh Look at Oregon's Agri-tourism". Its recommendations still ring true, but they are limited in their scope to **marketing and business-to-business networking activities**. In this report, the Agri-Business Council was put forth as an appropriate industry-based organization to partner with Travel Oregon. Specific recommendations include:

- Build agri-tourism's web presence on the Travel Oregon website and maintain the information to be fresh and up to date
- Include themed agritourism experiences
- Develop sustainable capacity for the Agri-Business Council's activities through website listing fees and membership dues
- Provide other marketing and media relations support.

Given the experience of other states and regions that have been leaders in developing agritourism, however, this is a **relevant but incomplete list of key catalyzing activities**. Other key focus areas include:

- Start up funding for organizing and basic research about the industry
- Strong support from a state agency or university
- Policy agenda to address inconsistencies and barriers to building a high quality agritourism sector that reinforces strong farmland protection while developing economic opportunities for farmers and their communities.

There are several categories of potential follow up actions for Travel Oregon. At this point they are offered as a **menu of possibilities to be assessed and prioritized, not a fully formed strategy by any means**. They include:

- A. **FIRST**, Setting clear goals for Travel Oregon's goals and role
 - Anything beyond enhanced promotion of agritourism to consumers through Travel Oregon marketing activities?

- B. **THEN**, Identifying key priorities for action (especially policy related as per Section III-) at the statewide level
 - Organizing state government stakeholders around common goals, commitment to collaboration- while avoiding getting pulled into a state of inertia by the caution sometimes inherent in state agencies with diverse and competing stakeholders
 - Broader statewide stakeholder organizing (with goal of specific recommendations and joint initiatives around targeted opportunities or barriers)
- C. **AND/OR** Identifying opportunities for regional projects to demonstrate benefits/success factors related to agritourism
 - Targeted regional organizing/ project development around specific destination development opportunities
 - Linking agritourism with other statewide niche marketing strategies especially around trails and route development.
- D. **AND/OR** Identifying opportunities to foster agritourism niche business development
 - Enhanced promotion of agritourism to existing and potential entrepreneurs
 - Increased technical assistance for agritourism operators
- E. **AND/OR** Improving knowledge/data about the sector, trends and needs for decision makers at business and policymaking levels
 - **AND/OR** Seeding the formation of an industry-driven association to develop and promote agritourism throughout the state

More detail about key questions and strategy options in each category is noted below:

A. Travel Oregon Goals

Determine specific desired focus of agritourism initiative from Travel Oregon's perspective, and implications for which key stakeholders to prioritize

- What is the role of wine tourism, which is a big part of, but also quite different/dominant aspect of agritourism? Potentially unproductively divisive stakeholder dynamics
- Targeting on existing farms wishing to expand products vs. all comers?
- Desire for explicit links with cultural/historical tourism (see Kentucky, Tennessee examples), outdoor recreation (see New Zealand) or other niches?
- Articulated desired links, strategies for building connections between regional and statewide level work.

Develop funding strategy to support organizing role, underwrite applied research, and jump start specific pilot initiatives

- Several states have used USDA funding to launch their agritourism programs
- Potential attraction for foundations in Oregon- tied to economic viability of food systems and community vitality
- Laying groundwork for a membership based association structure in the future (building off past work and lessons learned from the Agri-business Council of Oregon and other statewide agritourism associations)

- Oregon Department of Agriculture's Market Access program could support initial organizing
- Gather more detail about funding streams for similar efforts from outside Oregon

Focus and enhance agritourism promotion by Travel Oregon

- Internal working group connected with Oregon Bounty program
- Increase focused presence of agritourism on Travel Oregon website

Build visibility of Travel Oregon's interest in this niche to stakeholders

- Participate in Small Farms Program Agritourism Summit as a session moderator for Phase I and as a financial underwriter/more visible partner in Part II.
- Travel Oregon conference- invite [Jane Eckert](#) to present workshops at main conference and for RTS community gathering? Scottie Jones and others have recommended/used.

B. Provide leadership for new dialogue with statewide agencies/stakeholders to identify common ground/policy agenda that could be broadly supported

Identify core state agencies to engage and conduct pre-meeting with each regarding key issues, opportunities and concerns, opportunities for joint action- starting with existing agritourism advocates within key agencies

- Department of Agriculture. Katie Pearmine has provided names of Board members and Policy Director as noted in stakeholder list
- Business Oregon (Economic Development)- Erik Andersson
- Dept of Land Conservation and Development – Tom Hogue and Katherine Daniels have provided names
- Cooperative Extension- Melissa Fery will have additional contacts
- Be prepared to offer leadership from Travel Oregon to launch, with stated goal to move toward formal interagency collaborative or spin off within two years
- Department of Transportation, Cultural Trust, others?

Identify other core statewide stakeholders to engage early on. These groups have already expressed interest

- Farm Bureau
- 1000 Friends of Oregon
- Key agritourism entrepreneurs. All of the people interviewed for Phase I are very interested in participation.
- Association of Oregon Counties which convened a Farmland Activities Task Force that resulted in passage of SB 960; continued interest. Task force completed its work, but still an issue for counties.

Develop and prioritize list of potential statewide initiatives in support of agritourism that could be the focus of working groups and engage stakeholders, and identify lead implementer for each. Pick a specific focus rather than engaging in a comprehensive state agritourism development plan: the latter is too ambitious as a first collaborative effort!

- Liability insurance- compare Oregon's law with other states, and look into role of standards and organizational structure as factors for lowering costs and increasing availability

- Signage- look at model programs from other locations that specifically focus on agritourism resources, how they work, and how they fit with Oregon setting (see South Carolina, North Carolina). Explore whether signage for agritourism should best be addressed with other niche tourism sectors (e.g. bicycling) that are also interested in improved signage.
- Lodging development in EFU lands (see Yamhill study) - can a network of small scale lodging be cultivated statewide at a scale that results in viable businesses and farm preservation? Create working models of lodging options that interested entrepreneurs can take up. As noted in the previous bullet, also explore whether lodging development for agritourism should best be addressed with other niche tourism sectors (e.g. bicycling) that are also interested in expanded lodging options including on farms (camping, yurts, etc as well as traditional rooms)
- Food service- addressing policies and regulations that make it difficult to process and serve food on farms
- AOC Model for Farmland Activities Task Force (aimed at legislative changes)
- See agendas from other states early efforts for reference.

C. Sector-focused business development

Develop new resources for entrepreneurs interested in agritourism (Cooperative Extension and OEDA members could be important partners)

- Update the agritourism workbook and make information available through a web based portal. There are many models from other states for comparison and inspiration.
- Use County Fair structure and Small Farms Conferences as a venue for connecting with existing and potential agritourism entrepreneurs.
- Peer networks, mentor connections, ombudsman/troubleshooter for agritourism business ventures
- Seed funding for product development- Market access grants from DFA, Kickstarter idea
- See research component below in terms of niche market research
- Determine whether to focus on educating existing farmers about agritourism opportunities vs. assisting new/existing agritourism ventures on farms or partnering with farms (e.g. Farm to Fork type projects)

D. Regional destination development

Design and test regionally based projects that focus on coordinating county level decisions and decision-makers

- Develop a cluster of interconnected agritourism/other experiences as a place-based destination development strategy and a prototype
- Organize network of individuals who broker agritourism experiences between farmers and consumers (e.g. organize bicycle tours, farm to table events, guide services, etc)
- Consider parallel lessons learned from Scenic Bikeway organizing process- outreach and decision-making. Regional initiatives self-organized (as per bikeway applications) with technical assistance vs. selected by statewide stakeholders as prototypical?
- Since lack of lodging is an impediment to agritourism development, identify a geographic cluster of existing lodging facilities, including farm based enterprises, who are interested in developing agritourism themed experiences, and provide technical assistance
- Use Prineville RTS agritourism workshop to pilot more intensive regional collaborative opportunities

- Use these projects to build network of engaged agritourism operators who could provide leadership for an industry-driven association model for future work

E. Foundational research and agritourism association development

- Underwrite or otherwise support sector research as backbone for advocacy, engaging existing and potential agritourism operators, key agency partners
 - Building from existing national and regional trend data, develop inventory and profile of agritourism businesses in Oregon, their market and market potential (Consumer research) and economic development impact for use in program design and policy advocacy. This is a common foundation for other state agritourism initiatives, and it has not been done in Oregon to date.
- Provide direct organizing support for an industry-driven state association of agritourism businesses

Why try? It's important to note that despite agency leadership or dedicated funding for agritourism development to date, Oregon has some real strengths upon which to build. These include:

- Its raw agritourism product appeal (scenery, quality foodie food, authentic western culture, etc)
- Its experience with product development in other niche markets whose customers overlap with agritourism (particularly culinary and bicycle tourism)
- Its experience and leadership network for regional destination development in rural areas through the Rural Tourism Studio program
- Emerging allies for the cause, especially the Oregon State University Small Farms Program and individuals within agencies and organizations that have a stake in the future of sustainable farming and healthy rural economies.

APPENDIX: Partial List of Key Stakeholders and Potential Resource People

* = interviewed to date

Agritourism Businesses:

- * Kara Wilson Anglin, Wilson Ranches Retreat, Fossil (recommended 2 more in E Oregon- awaiting contact info)
- * Keith Barnhart, Willow Springs Guest Ranch, Lake County
- * Thomas Betts, Cascade Alpacas of Oregon, Hood River County
- * John Zielinski, EZ Orchard Market, Marion County (Board member of Farm Bureau, active in bringing North American Direct Farm Marketing Association conference to Oregon this coming winter)
- * Matthew Domingo, Founder, Farm to Fork Event Company, Portland
- * Sara Miller, Northeast Oregon Economic Development District, Wallowa County: also a rancher who hosts educational tours
- * Scottie Jones, Leaping Lamb Farmstay, Alsea, and founder, FarmStay US association

State Agencies:

Department of Land Conservation and Development

* Tom Hogue, Economic Development Specialist

Mike Morrissey, Policy

* Katherine Daniel, Farm and Forest Lands Specialist

Department of Agriculture

*Katie Pearmine- Specialty Crop and Market Access grants

Jim Johnson, Policy

Lynn Youngbar, State Board of Agriculture, former Executive Director, Rural Development Initiatives

Laura Masterson, Portland based CSA, (also on State Board of Agriculture) recommended by Katie P

University:

* Melissa Fery, Small Farms Program, Cooperative Extension Service, Oregon State University

Advocacy Organizations:

1000 Friends of Oregon

* Steve McCoy

Greg Holmes, Southern Oregon (recommended by K Daniel)

Farm Bureau

Dave Dillon- EVP

Ann Marie Moss recommended by John Zielinski as good reference on Farm Bureau policies

Friends of Family Farmers

Nellie McAdams

Regional planners:

Sarah Mizejewski, Lane County planner, food systems, involved with McKenzie Rural Tourism Studio

* Mary Stewart, former Executive Director of the Agri-Business Council of Oregon and primary author of the Clackamas County Master Plan for Agritourism.

Other resource people:

Anne Berblinger, Former State Director, U.S. Economic Development Administration, current organic farmer, Gales Meadow Farm, W Washington County

Erik Andersson, Business Development Officer- Oregon

Liability insurance:

Leslie Maiwald- Macadams in Baker 541-403-0155

Don Helmick, insurance, PDX