

OREGON AGRITOURISM COORDINATION MEETING

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NOTES

THREATS & OPPORTUNITIES ON OREGON FARM LAND

Erick Garman, Oregon Department of Agriculture Trade Manager

[Presentation Available here.](#)

Tom Hogue, Marion County Economic Development Coordinator

- One major threat to Oregon agriculture in general is the US Army Corps of Engineers Willamette Reallocation Project
 - Risk to losing water access for farms
 - Agriculture and water rights/access is a political issue in Oregon and Oregon politics are often driven by urban areas
- There is a need to recognize the complicated nature of how small farmer economies work, including the importance of diversifying into areas like agritourism to protect bottom lines from unforeseen or unavoidable impacts of weather, water access, etc.
- Agritourism has the potential to influence urban people and politics
 - Agribusiness does not have the same insight
- Industrial agriculture would greatly benefit from embracing agritourism as a way to engage urban populations politically
- There is a responsibility to hold the quality line as an agritourism industry to be able to make progress politically

Q&A

What about threats like solar, mining, urban sprawl – what is the biggest current threat?

- Population growth, which translates to politics
- Nationally, Oregon is already doing a pretty good job. Succession is a real risk as Oregon's farmer population continues to age with fewer farmers in new generations

Access to land is a barrier for young farmers, how can we address this?

- The state needs to decide whether they are willing to create new structures that help family farms / small scale farms gain access to and stay on their land
- Looking into new, unconventional ways to finance new farmers
 - Oregon Aglink and Friends of Family Farmers
 - Rogue Farm Corps Intern opportunities to work on farms

Is agritourism protected under the Right to Farm law (Farm Bill)?

- There has been liability legislation related to agritourism. Agritourism on its own is likely not protected directly by the Farm Bill because it's not considered ancillary to farm use land.
- This law protects growers from court decisions based on customary noises, smells, dust, or other nuisances associated with farming. It also limits local governments, and special districts from administratively declaring certain farm and forest products to be nuisances or trespasses (ORS 30.930). There is nothing in legislation or in case law that protects any aspect of Agritourism. In other words, if your farm stand is attracting lots of guests and creating a traffic issues or dust from their cars traveling on your road, Right to Farm isn't going to help.
- Agritourism doesn't have any stand-alone legislation so gets folded into other categories, which is why it's a difficult question to answer

Looking at traditional family farms and succession – it seems like retirement capital and property are tied together. Retiring farmers are still living on the land and relying on the farmland for retirement income. Agritourism could be a solution to add revenue through new enterprises by younger farmers on the farmland of retired farmers.

- One way for agritourism to be brought into the mainstream of farming is for it to become part of the expected lifepath of a farm economy.

What are some ideas for how to appeal to urban populations to normalize and bring agritourism into the mainstream?

- Getting people out to farms is the first step because the experience allows urban voters to tell the stories of small farms

Why should the burden be on small farmers to educate urban populations?

- It shouldn't be. It's going to take evolved partnership between small and big ag to address the threats facing agriculture in Oregon. Programs like

Aglink are helping to create educational programs that bring school children out to farms (big and small).

- SAGE Center in eastern Oregon was created for that purpose (Sustainable Agriculture and Energy Center)

Cumulative impact – who is measuring the impact of agritourism?

- Oregon land use law says that planners must evaluate the cumulative impact of a land use that's proposed and not currently allowed
 - Typically, this has meant evaluate cumulative impact of an on-farm dwelling against other dwellings of all types.
 - Nowhere in the system do we actually evaluate cumulative impacts that take into consideration everything going on in the area in question (ADUs, special events, solar, etc.)
 - It will take a much bigger conversation to figure out how to more accurately measure and address cumulative impacts
 - Currently trying to engage DLCD around this

How can coastal communities and fisheries be better included in these efforts?

- Continue engaging with this agritourism network
- Make sure fisheries and coastal ag are also offering lodging and opportunities to purchase products on site
- Create partnerships with restaurants and others to develop itineraries that build in coastal agritourism

ADVANCING AGRITOURISM IN OREGON

What activities are you currently engaged in that are advancing agritourism?

- Agritourism was one of four top priorities that came out of Friends of Family Farmers listening sessions
- March 27th rally day around current legislation
 - Farm café
 - Brewery

What agritourism challenges and/or opportunities do you see that will "move the needle" the most for your business, organization, community and region? What's the one thing that, if done tomorrow, could make the greatest impact?

Collaboration

- Opportunity for local agritourism networks to make sure growers are working together to avoid missed opportunities to get local food into local markets
 - Co-opatition (combining cooperation and competition)
- Collaborate to promote agritourism as a stabilizing force for agriculture and be able to share that vision to Oregonians and the world
- Work together to help raise all boats and fill all pockets (\$)

Legislation

- Politically, need to align to enact positive changes
- On-site visits in-region to help farms cross-promote. Welcome policy makers on site to influence policy
- Align legislation statewide to even the playing field across the state for agritourism
- Land use laws around farmstays – how do we make it easier for farmers to offer lodging? Good to lobby around one issue / goal first
- Land use laws need to change to allow farmers to build structures for farm managers and multiple-generations of farmers to live on-farm
- Federal and state funding support / agritourism lobbyists at national level

How can we more effectively work together and begin collaborating to create community-based change?

- Being here is the first step
- Attend listening sessions / tourism studios
- Be willing to cross boundaries
- Streamline communication (technology and generational barriers)
- Generate serious economic data about the impact of agritourism in Oregon
- Incorporate other agritourism products into beer and wine tastings / experiences
- Coalesce some kind of organization that can be a central voice for the industry
 - Oregon Community Food Systems Network
 - Oregon Agritourism Association could be a useful thing if it were a C6 (would be able to lobby)

- Maybe it's a working group of an existing organization
- Develop a focused vision that selects three things to organize around – maybe starting with farm stays
- Legislation, Regulation and Frustration
- Legislative solution to farm stay barriers
- Agritourism steering committee is a start but there is a longevity question about how that work will continue long-term
- Georgia Department of Agriculture has taken the Georgia Agritourism Coalition under its wing recently
 - Georgia Grown
 - Agritourism facebook group has provided community
 - Agritourism Conference is held once a year by Georgia Grown

NEXT STEPS

- Interested in joining the steering committee? Contact Scott Bricker at SBricker@TravelOregon.com
- Attend the next agritourism coordination meeting – to be held this summer in a location to be determined.
- [Join the Travel Oregon Agritourism Industry Newsletter](#) to make sure you learn about upcoming events and opportunities.