



Agriculture & Tourism Partners of Illinois
c/o Northern Illinois Tourism Development Office

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May 2010, Volume XVI



A Note from John Pike, ATPI President

Greetings Agritourism Partners,

It is hard to believe that five months of 2010 will soon be in the books. Farmers markets are up and running, trees have bloomed, crops are being planted, festivals are being planned and seasonal marketing efforts are underway. In spite of the less than cheerful nature of most newscasts involving business, customer traffic and interest in agritourism related activities is growing. And the majority of consumers don't even realize they are involving themselves in agritourism.

It is true that most consumers never did adopt the term Agritourism into their vocabulary (Ecotourism wasn't either). They simply know that they are going to fun places that happen to be located in the country like wineries, pumpkin patches, orchards and farms. While many people have heard me talk about the idea that agritourism is more of a marketing tool than a stand alone industry, I also think there is a value in keeping the term alive for internal purposes, even if it doesn't mean much to our customers, as it does give a rather diverse group of farm based businesses a common platform to meet and participate in promotional activities that result in benefits to business, consumers and the local economy.

When efforts to organize ATPI were initiated, the opportunities for Agriculture and Tourism professionals to work together had been limited and neither sector had a good understanding of the other. This coupled with the fact that other specialized activities, while serving important needs, tended to segment specific types of non-commodity agriculture businesses had held back a lot of collaboration and cross promotion that we see today. Having a critical mass of unique attractions has allowed Tourism professionals to help market rural areas more effectively and in many of these areas agritourism is now viewed as a valuable economic develop tool as well as an effective marketing tool as we have talked about in the past.

With ongoing collaboration, the Agriculture and Tourism Partners of Illinois will continue to enhance local, regional and statewide benefits of agritourism. When local operations promote each other and communicate with Tourism professionals it is good for business AND the consumer. A great result!

As always, be SAFE and PROFITABLE!

John



May 15 - May 16: 3rd Annual Art of Illinois Wine Festival

What type of wine goes with an art show? At the

2010 Sustainable Agriculture Tours Scheduled

URBANA – For the eighth consecutive year, University of Illinois Extension is offering tours that highlight sustainable agriculture operations around the state of Illinois. “This year’s tours truly represent the vast diversity in Illinois’s small farms,” said Deborah Cavanaugh-Grant, Small Farm and Sustainable Agriculture Extension Specialist who is coordinating the tours. “The tours allow visitors to meet these extraordinarily, creative farmers and producers and find out how they solve their unique problems every day.”

The schedule for the 2010 sustainable agriculture tours is as follows:

May 27, The Business of Vermiculture
Wilken Farms
Iroquois County

May 15 - 16 Art of Illinois Wine Garden, the answer is simple – Illinois wine.

The Illinois Grape Growers and Vintners Association (IGGVA), Downtown Springfield Inc. (DSI), and the Old Capitol Foundation are teaming up again to offer the third annual Art of Illinois Wine Garden from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. Saturday, May 15 and noon to 5 p.m. Sunday, May 16. The event is open to anyone 21 years of age or older and will be held at the southwest corner of Fifth and Jefferson Streets in downtown Springfield. Admission is \$10, which includes a wine glass and five sampling tickets. Wine may also be purchased by the glass, bottle and case. The wine tasting event is being held in conjunction with the Old Capitol Art Fair that weekend.

The Illinois wineries taking part in the May 15 – 16 event include: Baxter's Vineyards & Winery, Nauvoo; Prairie State Winery, Genoa; Ridge View Winery, Mt. Sterling; Fox Creek Vineyards, Olney; Lasata Winery, Lawrenceville; Collver Family Winery, Barry; Willett's Winery & Cellar, Manito; Berryville Vineyards, Claremont; Hopewell Winery, Rockport; Vahling Vineyards, Stewardson; Shawnee Winery, Vienna; Hill Prairie Winery, Oakford; Pheasant Hollow Winery, Whittington; Illinois River Winery, Utica; Spirit Knob Winery, Ursa; and Alto Vineyards, Alto Pass.

Hosted by: IGGVA, Downtown Springfield, Inc., Old State Capitol Foundation.

Time: 11 a.m. - 6 p.m. Saturday; Noon - 5 p.m. Sunday

Location: Fifth and Jefferson Streets, Downtown Springfield

Phone: (217) 524-0587 www.illinoiswine.com

Agritourism growing in county, state

By DIANA SROKA - dsroka@nwherald.com

Saturday, April 17, 2010

Acre upon acre of fields at Royal Oaks in Harvard are filled with apple trees ready for picking, but the 50,000 people who flock to the orchard each year enjoy more than just the fruit. The family-owned farmstead also features a restaurant, gift shop, bakery, entertainment pavilion, petting zoo and carousel, among other attractions. "An apple grower these days has a really hard time making it on just retailing apples," said Dennis Norton, son-in-law of the farm's owners. "It was just necessary for survival."

Farmers across the state have turned to agritourism – farm or agriculturally based entertainment marketed to tourists – to diversify their income and, in many instances, stay afloat. In McHenry County, you-pick pumpkin patches, corn mazes and wineries have become part of the county's brand identity. "Agritourism is what makes us unique against other destinations," said Cort Carlson.

As director of the McHenry County Convention and Visitor's Bureau, it's Carlson's job to find ways to attract people to the county. And the most effective way to do that is to market what other counties cannot offer. Chicago has the lakefront and Magnificent Mile. Suburban Cook County has Woodfield Mall. Gurnee has Six Flags Great America. Where does that leave McHenry County? Home of pastoral views, cows visible from the roads and clean, country air – all things that provide a distinctive edge. "We can't compete with theme parks," Carlson said. "But we can offer them something



June 18, Feeding Universities Sustainably
[Farmer Brown's Production Company](#) and [Mulberry Hill Farm](#)
Jackson County

July 27, Illinois Berries
J & J Berry Farm
Jersey County

August 13, Romance Tour – Flowers and Wine
[Bright Flower Nursery](#) and [Famous Fossil Vineyard](#) & Winery
Jo Daviess County and Stephenson County

September 22, Agritourism – Farm Fresh Fun
[Country Corner](#)
Henry County

A fee of \$20 per person will be charged for each tour, which includes lunch. This year two adults pay \$30 when registered together and children under the age of 10 attend free. Registration at least one week in advance is required.

Click [here](#) to register and for more details about each of the tours including a map and agenda.

To register by phone, contact Donna Cray at 217-241-4644. For more information, contact Deborah Cavanaugh-Grant (217-968-5512; cvnghgrn@illinois.edu).

University of Illinois Extension is a statewide educational network that links the resources and research of the University of Illinois to the people of Illinois. The programs and workshops, which take place throughout the state, address issues involving youth, families, community development, agriculture, and natural resources. If reasonable accommodations are needed in order to participate in any of the programs, call 217-241-4644.

unique, something different, and just hope it's something they're [looking for]."

In recent weeks, agritourism has gained particular attention after Johnsburg-area farmer Vernon Stade requested a conditional-use permit from county officials that would allow him to expand his agritourism business. Stade wants to offer non-farm attractions all season long, instead of only on select weekends. However, municipal officials in neighboring Spring Grove opposed his permit request, claiming that growth in Stade's business could clash with future residential developments and cause noise or traffic problems for neighbors. It will be up to the county board to decide whether to provide Stade with the permit.

In the meantime, agritourism outlets continue to generate many dollars for the county and the state. "It's a pretty significant number," said John Pike, economic development educator with the University of Illinois Extension. Pike and other tourism experts said it was nearly impossible to tell just how much money or foot traffic was generated by agriculturally based attractions. Farmer's markets, for example, don't charge admissions fees and therefore can't arrive at exact numbers of attendance. Since many make day trips out of their visits to farms and orchards and don't spend the night in hotels, the overnight-stay statistics that tourism experts traditionally use to gauge traveler figures don't apply. "It's really hard to track even if we did an in-depth study on it," Pike said.

However, there are some metrics that might paint a picture of agritourism's footprint on the local economy. In 2008, travel expenditures totaled about \$198.9 million in McHenry County, Carlson said. That figure represents not only agritourism, but meetings, conventions and other attractions. Agritourism might have played a major role in that number because many travelers will buy gas, stop at restaurants or bed and breakfasts if they traveled from a distance.

In 2007, the Illinois Grape Growers and Vintners Association released a report on the economic impact of grapes and wineries – which is just one outlet within agritourism's scope. The study found that wine and wine grapes contributed about \$319 million to the state economy.



A growing sect within the agritourism industry is farmer's markets and you-picks, said Bonnie Heimbach, Executive Director of the Northern Illinois Tourism Office. She said the "eat organic" movement is largely to thank for this. "People like that experience when they're actually able to go out and get farm fresh, green products," Heimbach said. In some pockets throughout the state, buying fresh produce from farms has become so popular that tour groups

will spend the day picking fresh vegetables and then afterward participate in a cooking class in which the produce is used immediately. "There is a whole wave that is growing with people looking for culinary tourism," she said.

That's good news for McHenry County. Warmer weather means farmer's markets will be opening soon in many spots from downtown Crystal Lake to Royal Oaks. "We've also got an apple barn where we sell pre-picked apples and fruit," Norton said. "We wanted to make it a good day trip for people."

The tours are sponsored by the University of Illinois Extension, the North Central Region Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE) Professional Development Program, the Agriculture Tourism Partners of Illinois (ATPI), Agroecology/Sustainable Agriculture Program (ASAP) at the University of Illinois, Food Works, and the Peoria Chapter of the Initiative for the Development for Entrepreneurs in Agriculture (IDEA).



ATPI Business Spotlight

Garfield Farm and Inn Museum

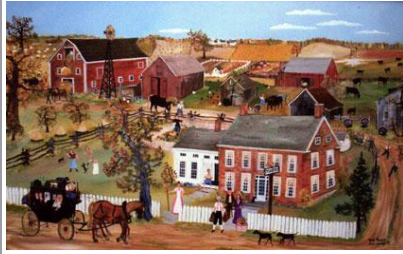
La Fox, Illinois

630/584-8485

www.garfieldfarm.org



Garfield Farm and Tavern, listed on the National Register of Historic Sites, is a 281-acre farmstead and former 1840s teamster inn 5 miles west of Geneva, IL. When Timothy Garfield and his family built the brick inn on the family farm in 1846, it became a center for community activity. It was an inn for hundreds of teamsters and travelers, a ballroom for jubilant 4th of July dances, a meeting place, and a place to drop in for good company and a mug of hard cider.



The last Garfield family owner, Elva Ruth Garfield, founded the museum in 1977 to teach about America's prairie farm heritage. The museum brings together the farming experiences of the past 150 years with an appreciation of the natural environment the Garfields found when they came to Illinois. Three original buildings still stand at the farm.

The 1842 hay and grain barn, the 1849 horse barn, and the 1846 inn all survive with three later barns now on site built between 1860-1906.

Today, the museum offers a variety of educational, family, and entertainment events. Seminars are held, special shows bring unique collections, and prairie walks are conducted monthly. There are social events like barn dances and candlelight tavern receptions at the Inn. Upcoming summer events include a Rare Breeds Show, 1840's Days, Dinner & Dance Barn Fundraiser, children's summer camps, and an Antique Tool Show. A complete listing of upcoming events can be found on their website.

The Garfield Farm Museum is open for drop in tours from 1-4 p.m. on Sundays and Wednesdays from June through September. All other times throughout the year are by appointment. School field trips are welcome and can also be scheduled by appointment. The standard 90 minute tour of the buildings and grounds covers issues such as living conditions in 1840s Illinois, innkeeping and transportation, farming techniques and production, and historic breeds of animals and garden vegetables. Visit the Garfield Farm Museum for some history and fun! All contact information to arrange a large tour listed above.