

Group Memory – February 8, 2007 meeting for AgTourism association

Proposed Agenda (30 minutes each)

- Organization
- Funding
- Definition of AgTourism
- Who Else Needs to be at the Table?

Expectations

- bring people to farm to show how tea is grown
- farm to be successful...networking is important
- how to be fully legal?
- how does Polynesian Adventure Tours fit into this operation?
- support business of AgTourism
- learn how to make \$\$ with EcoTours
- to get support for AgVentures projects
- legal issues related to AgTourism
- DOA - interested in how AgTourism evolves
- form & create viable AgTourism industry
- learn to help with AgTourism ventures on Oahu
- how Visitors Bureau can support AgTourism
- integrate farm stays & tourism in mango farm
- journalist – wants to observe & report on meeting
- figure out what's happening
- see association take off to support AgTourism and the future
- learn how it will help ecotours & business websites
- observe/just interested to learn
- see county & state develop legislation to protect farmers
- how our farmers can help to benefit association
- encourage state & county to meet promise to promote agriculture...support creating bill for small farm sustainability
- see if right answer is another group or use an existing group...tend to legal challenges
- small farms & larger farms have equal representation

Concerns about having this ORGANIZATION?

- Need lessons learned from Hawaii AgVentures
- Should an existing organization take on this project?
- AgVentures does certification & provides info at the state level already
- What are the current state laws for permissible uses versus what the county says is OK?
- Still no clarity of jurisdiction of state vs. county about agtourism
- Potentially this group can help inform this decision
- Group should look into idea of forming as chapter under Hawaii Farm Bureau
- “No Tourist Left Behind” to include all types of farm/ecotours and allow for certified and uncertified farms
- Liability insurance is possible if certification is achieved
- Focal point – trying to have “one mind” which makes a difference in funding and legislation which can then make a difference in quality in the experience (e.g. tour on motorcycle). One incident on one farm could bring down everyone.
- Once you have an association, you can speak as “an association” to cover both the county & state legislation, and to talk with the Health dept., Federal laws, county laws. The association would do the footwork and the members would benefit.
- One voice to deal with county, state, federal agencies to provide many benefits for the future. This may take a couple of years.
- Build on something that already exists.

Suggestion to form a committee (volunteers) to research different aspects of how to organize, types of organizations and possibilities, and bring back recommendations for the next meeting. Make suggestions on potential structure of the organization (e.g. statewide organization with county or regional representation), how often the group should meet (e.g. general membership meeting quarterly with executive board meeting more regularly), whether the organization should require membership fees, be non-profit or for-profit. Volunteers are: Lani Weigert, Stacy Davis, Diane Sands, Kristin McGrath, Jennifer Buss, Hans Eckert.

Concerns about FUNDING?

SHORT-TERM FUNDING:

- Need paid assistant; paid on an hourly basis. Kent has a little funding now for short term. DOA (Todd) also an option for funding
- County Money...work with DayDay of Hawaii County for money. She is very supportive of the AgTourism association.
- Grants: look for a good grant writer
- Kona Pacific (KPFC) has offered \$500.00 on a short-term basis (Sotero Agoot)
- Also possible for the assistant to work on a part-time, short-term basis while he/she operates his/her farm/personal business
- Assistant should be paid a good living wage and shouldn't feel like she/he is volunteering hours (e.g. Hawaii AgVentures; Hawaii Farm Bureau). Commit to having a full-time assistant with a good salary.

LONG-TERM FUNDING

- Require a membership fee that is substantial enough to support a paid position(s)
- Program should be sustainable to have paid positions to prevent volunteer "burn-out"
- Look for direct marketing funding & federal grants. Use John Betlach as resource
- Look for USDA and other federal programs for funding
- Hawaii Tourism Authority is a resource for funding
- Look to other foundations and corporate funding
- Possible funding with the AgLeadership Foundation
- Create a product that is sold by the farmer to promote the association. For example, members give 1 tour a month to promote & benefit the association.
- Create goods & products that can be sold at Farm Tours to enhance experience and benefit the association. Examples include t-shirt, canvas tote bag, 12 Trees Project posters
- Get monies for the public through community outreach and public support of the association.

Suggestion to form a committee to research different types of funding, both short-term and long-term, types of organizations and possibilities, and bring back recommendations for the next meeting. Make suggestion on whether the organization should require membership, be non-profit or for-profit. Volunteers are: Lani Weigert, Randall Rupar, Kent Fleming, Sherri Miller, Mae Kaler. John Betlach to advise.

Definition of AgTourism?

“A farming or ranching operation that directly markets products and experiences derived primarily from local agriculture operations and that supplements the agricultural use of the site”

Concerns about the definition above:

- substitute the word “directly” with “commercially”
- include statement or clause that includes the support operations involved with AgTourism. For example, bus tours, biking/hiking tours,
- What does “operation” mean?
- Is the infrastructure involved with AgTourism (e.g.: marketing/sales) included in the definition?
- Add “their” after “markets” so it says “market *their* products”
- Need broader definition of products “from our farm” or can we sell other’s products?
- include “education to visitors” during AgTour
- Add chefs to definition to allow for culinary tours
- Definition would include intention to improve economic viability for small farms and ranching operations.
- This definition does not include the point where Agriculture and Tourism intersect & interface. We’re interested in how these two elements interface
- Would want a benefit of the definition to include the legality of the operation and protection for farmers
- may need definition from visitor’s perspective or “experience”. Should the definition be perspective of user or producer?
- Until AgTourism is clearly defined, it becomes difficult to regulate on a state and local level
- We need to have a good definition of AgTourism before going to legislature
- Add “quality” in front of “experiences” and “products” so it says *quality products and quality experiences*.
- Do the people writing the bill know what AgTourism is? Do they know the big picture? If we’re not proactive, then legislation will be reactive. Legislation often is a result of someone “complaining”.
- Add “direct experience with farmer” to definition
- Go much further to define this statement
- Change “farming and ranching” to “Agricultural operation” because agriculture is already defined in state law, so we wouldn’t need to redefine it here.
- What about co-ops? Does the definition allow for co-ops?
- Everything won’t be included in the first statement...we may have changes or addendums in a few years.
- Definition might only work over time. We may need to re-evaluate, change with time. suggestion to reassess every couple of years.
- Definition needs to be dynamic and evolve as the industry grows
- Yet, we need a starting point

Definition (continued)

Suggestion to form a committee to research changes to the existing definition and draft a new definition. Committee will bring back recommendations for the next meeting.

Volunteers are: Ken Love, Nancy Ginter-Miller, Randall Rupar, Tom Rosenbaum, Mike Katz, Kent Fleming.

Suggestion to form a committee to research positive and negative aspects of County Bill 148. Propose changes to the County Bill 148 (legislation). Volunteers are: Howard Conant, Carri Pattison, Joe Alban, Lani Weigert, Hans Eckert, John Betlach, Nancy Ginter-Miller.

Wall Safe

- Hawaii AgVentures is moving toward sustainability to provide part-time pay but may not be able to provide full-time pay
- Need to have a very comprehensive plan and objectives to get more funding.

Evaluation of Meeting

What worked:

- Donna (facilitator) kept everyone on track
- Small issues brought out bigger issues
- We were able to delegate to committees
- Keeping record of the meeting is crucial
- Feel included in a good group

What could be changed or better?

- Discuss potential set-up of organization and how this organization will look
- could have 2 facilitators or recorders

Who Else Needs to be at the table?

- Each island needs representation of existing operations (e.g.: MTP, Kauai Coffee, Dole)
- Government needs to be here: county, politicians, Dept of Health, R&D
- NELHA and “Friends of NELHA”
- American Culinary Federation
- Kamehameha Schools
- Auditing Branch of State Government

NEXT STEPS

Next meeting proposed for March 12, 13 or 14th for 3 hours from 9am-1:00pm Can do it with Polycom.

COMMITTEES:

Organization:

Lani Weigert, Hans Eckert, Stacy Davis, Kristin McGrath, Diane Sands, Jennifer Bliss

Funding:

Lani Weigert, Randall Rugar, Kent Fleming, Sherri Miller, Mae Kaler, John Betlach (advisory)

Next draft of Definition of AgTourism:

Ken Love, Nancy Ginter-Miller, Randall Rugar, Tom Rosenbaum, Mike Katz, Kent Fleming

County Bill 148 (legislation)

Kent Fleming, Carri Pattison, Howard Conant, Joe Alban, Lani Weigert, Hans Eckert, John Betlach, Nancy Ginter-Miller