

Agtourism Association Meeting
Kona CES Office
April 9, 2007

Value of Assoc. to Members

Ag clusters – group of like-minded agtourism businesses on a tour route.

Trend – 30% increase in agtourism in North America—movement toward ag clusters.

Benefits provided:

- Authentic experience
- Education
- Dining
- Shared transport costs
- Gets visitor to stay in one area longer
- Diversity
- “Apple Road” increased accessibility, variety of activities for visitors
- Community and Econ
- Combined advertising and marketing
- Opportunities for regional ID. Only created by a group.
- Seasonal diversity. Multiple clusters require a level of organization
- Minimize scheduling conflicts as a result of coordination
- Group insurance plan—significant lower rates
- Universal signage—creates consistency (Idea – Heritage corridors in place – work from that)
- Assoc. could create standard—modeled on something existing and successful
- Cooperative marketing (reduce cost)
- Product development—the experience
- Work with zoning to proactively design activities with least negative impact.
- Shared transportation minimizes vehicles on road.
- Opportunities in joint food processing
- Quality control and safety issues
- Promote awareness among fresh food producers with tourism industry and affiliations groups—chefs, hotels
- Decrease redundancy if make framework at state level first—then each county can do.

Venue for Next Meeting

- To get more people at next meeting: Need to take to decision-makers. Most are on Oahu, may need to meet there. Visitor industry, transport, Farm Bureau, planning departments. Need critical mass, momentum and power. Need potential funders.

Organization

- Criteria for being a non-profit? When? Establish first—then go to Oahu know who we are first.
- Decided to be non-profit but not what type.

- Important to include stakeholders—many are on Oahu—need to hear what we’re saying. Bring mission statement.
- State bill based on fact that counties must pass an ordinance first.
- Get together with HI County planners, Council, etc. before going to Oahu.
- Draft for county ordinance needed (lobby for support). This organization being created these happening simultaneously. State leg. Waiting for county action.
- Coordinate discussions so not done differently at each county—also duplication of efforts.
- Existing bill—FB supportive of concept but concerned about levels of involvement at each county—so county must first regulate—then state bill takes effect—FB position positive and FB supports fully.
- Committee of people from each county—our group, county people, tourism, Health, FB should all be on committee. Create a template. Reduce redundancy. Saves a lot of work. Work out template.
- Proactive, not reactive
- Work statewide—compromise occurs during discussion and people move away from self interest
- Association must also be reactive.
- Each island is unique—concerts different, might bog down process—disadvantage to working at state level. Suggest Big Island be a role model—others can follow.
- Perspective of other islands might broaden perspective
- Original template—broad vision would be helpful
- More in common than differences.

State Organization with Island Control by Ordinance

Organizational:

- Need to communicate with planning departments so regs. aren’t so expensive that small farms can’t participate.
- In this assoc. need a range of sizes—small farmer to large corp. (eg. Dole Plantation, Maui Tropical Plantation)
- Ideas on representation: Council Districts, Farm Bureau dist., state rep. districts
- FB districts suggested because fewest districts, equal representation FB districts are based on regions.
- This org. needs to work with other organizations. Thinks FB has similar goals. We are small part-see Nancy’s Handout.
- Structure, expectation, desired outcomes must be articulated in terms of potential collaboration.
- At some point need to have decision maker Agtourism Council—rep. from all islands.
- Crucial issue—cannot depend on volunteers. In small committees one person has done most work.
- AgVentures—already in existence. Statewide though fledgling
- “Alternative Hawaii” A la mua also doing agtourism
- Big Island FB operates AgVentures and it is self sufficient. Based here; statewide tours 2 people. 8 large group tours/year and weekly tours. Have already

addressed multitude of issues being discussed. Also involved in legislative side. Work with 85 operations statewide.

- What are strengths/weaknesses of A.V.? Staffing is weakness.
- Training and certification would be needed for consistency.
- Assoc. needs to find out what AgVentures is already doing.
- Does organization want to host tours? AgVentures is a for-profit tour operator, not an organization or a certification/regulatory organization,
- Win-win for AgVentures and this organization to work together.
- Or adapt and create entity similar to AgVentures not competitors because big market
- On individual basis, ag-tour is complicated. AgVentures helps get individuals thru rigmarole.
- Big market. Want consistent product because reflects on all agtourism.
- Member participants not charged (must be HFBBF member) Quality commitment. Visits farm, makes recommendation.
- Relationship—we could provide more business. AgVentures provides farms/farmers.
- Look at other organizations—educational non-profits but have for-profit entity.
- Have committee discussions in committee.
- Get info from Lorie on specifics of what AgVentures does—where can work together, reduce duplication.
- Structure of organization—committee make first draft.
- Decision made previously to be non-profit.
- For profit entity as part of a non-profit.
- FB already has non-profit and for-profit going; organization being created must decide function. What would for-profit entity be for? Assoc. purpose.
- Nonprofit with potential for for-profit arm. Don't have to be established at same time.
- Funding available—but must act. Start as non-profit education, information association. Can be restructured later if needed.
- Could start under umbrella of another organization such as HFBBF or Ag Leadership Foundation of Hawaii.
- Must first discover what purpose is. Need mission statement, compare to other org., discover areas of overlap, then may decide to fold into another group.
- Agreed upon definition. of ag-tourism.
- HFBBF as umbrella—already non-profit . puts ag. at heart of organization. For starting—until we get established. Need to have an organization to start things moving. Alliance seems natural.
- HFBBF likes the structure/purpose of org. Interested in being the entity to house this org. as we develop. Alan does have to make final check with his Board.
- May even consider three way alignment with HFBBF, Agritourism, AgVentures
- HFBBF has a 5/12 board meeting. Can we get proposal done for that meeting.
- Need a funding vessel in order to pay Diane. Ag Leadership Foundation is willing to do this.

Mission Statement Ideas

- Cultural heritage—preservation of historic and rural landscape, family values
- Economic development
- Tourism development
- Agricultural development
- Hire someone for 40-50 hours ~ \$1000. Take info from last meetings, gather info, from HFBF, AgVentures, other possible organizations and farm tourism industry. 1 on 1 with tourism reps to find out needs or wants. Develop prework and focus of organization, work with mission statement. Bring to group Lulani—volunteered to help form non-profit.
- Need to know focus of group. Big hurdle is many activities not legal. Fundamental change needed: every small farm is a small business, bringing a bus changes operation to a commercial business according to Planning Dept. Farmers right to have public is limited to roadside stand. Focus on changing thinking within country.
- Need to have a legislative voice.
- Good news is many agtourism activities are not stated (i.e. not expressly prohibited)
- Leg. Voice too narrow—need public policy voice (govt. affairs).
- Galvanizing force—farmers aren't criminals because they want to bring people on to their farm.
- Need for infrastructure for individual farms planned into some agtourism organizations.
- Ask county to help build agritourism.
- Forming this association will take time. Participants have to stick with the challenge of having to collaborate and be open to hearing the voices of others.
- We need to create strategies that enable more cross-communication.
- Kent has been a great force for agtourism in state. Need him as an ambassador for agtourism. Want to engage him.
- What's missing: we don't have reps. of tourism industry at this table.
- Mission statement needs to entice them to participate.

Policy on Decision Making

Background information on why this policy was developed: The small group working on the definition of Agtourism met three times before coming up with a definition they were ready to share with the large group at the March 12th meeting. During the March 12th meeting, the definition that the small group recommended was not selected and some small group members felt that their work was negated by larger group. Because so much of the work of the Association will be done by volunteers in committees, we want to create a policy that legitimized the efforts of these committees.

- In the future, people who are interested in a particular issue will be highly encouraged to get involved in the appropriate committee working on that issue.

- When a committee brings back a recommendation to the larger group, people will have an opportunity for input/feedback, but the decision will not be made at that meeting. The committee will have an opportunity to take the input back into committee to integrate it into a final recommendation. That recommendation will then be brought back to the large group for final decision making.

Budget Feedback:

- Clarification—trying to bring in everybody interested in the Assn.
- Should create category between \$60 and \$500—suggest \$200.
- Money for other memberships needs to be in budget. e.g. Hawaii Visitors Bureau. (\$500) would represent us when go to trade shows.
- Membership dues—e.g. look at HCA membership. Puts votes in hands with biggest money when membership dues this high. Look for other forms of funding. e.g. grants, collecting money for a farm visit.
- If come under HFBF--\$90 for farmers, \$60 for others. FYI +county dues of \$4-6
- Can director be paid?
- HFBF also has corp. fee/member of \$300.
- Another category—pledges by founding members. Costs ~\$1500 to set up non-profit.
- Grants have deadlines.
- Need some people to put up up-front money. Need to ask people who willing to put up money. Predevelopment money.
- Ag Leadership Foundation is open to having a proposal submitted for them to be the fiscal agent of this Assn.—Board willing but would have to be set-up.
- Funds via Kent almost gone—cannot put money into that acct.

Follow up:

- Task: What will be the activity or activities that this Association can focus on that will address a significant need not currently being addressed in our community? This need, if addressed, must make a significant difference in our community. If we can identify this need or needs, it will bring people to table. Group to work on Task: Diane Sands, Howard Conant, Nancy Miller (gone 4/18-28, some email access), Lorie Farrell, Kent Fleming, Lani Weigert. Need something by 5/12 for the HFBF Board meeting. Next Agtourism Assn. mtg. needs to be held before May 12.
- A proposal needs to be developed for the Ag Leadership Foundation to set up mechanism to be fiscal agent.
- Diane send or post group memory. Everyone has 1 week to provide input (also being collected at this mtg.) regarding 2 “drivers” and who is willing to put up some money for start up/pre-development.
- Next meeting—to discuss committee recommendation. Meeting scheduled for May 3rd, Thursday from 9am-noon in the Kona CES Office. We will work to set up polycom for the other islands. Need to try to get someone from FB at the meeting. Need to make concerned effort to invite those who already do farm visits or are thinking about it to be at next meeting.