

San Mateo County Agritourism Guidelines Review: Discussion Notes for the August 8, 2022 Agricultural Advisory Committee Meeting

Note: Existing Agritourism Guidelines available in your green binder or online [here](#).

Length/Frequency of Agritourism Uses: 45 consecutive day events twice per year

- **Per current Agritourism guidelines:**
 - Allow temporary agritourism uses and facilities on all agricultural lands, but *limit them in scale, location, and time*. Require staff level review to confirm temporary uses are consistent with these guidelines.
 - Uses that occur for more than 45 consecutive days or more than two (2) times per year require a Planned Agricultural District Permit, or a Resource Management Permit, a Coastal Development Permit, and review by the Agricultural Advisory Committee.
- **Subcommittee Discussion Questions:**
 - *Is this secondary to agriculture on site? Is it limited in scale, location & time?*
 - *Does the amount of people onsite constitute an impact? To traffic, soils, neighbors? Is the impact limited in duration or is there a cumulative impact?*
 - *Would this trigger a PAD or LCP permit?*
 - *If the days are non-consecutive, would this constitute year-round use?*
 - *Would changing this conflict with existing PAD regulations?*
- **Notes on Subcommittee Recommendations:**
 - **Event Type:** agritourism events are currently limited by the length and frequency of the event to 45 consecutive days twice per year, originally designed around the Pumpkin and Xmas Tree seasons.
 - **Frequency:** we discussed allowing one 90 consecutive day event per year, 12 non-consecutive events not to exceed 7 days, or keeping the two 45 consecutive day events per year.
 - **Attendees:** not discussed, current guidelines do not limit or qualify agritourism events based on number of attendees/participants.

Length/Frequency of Agritourism Uses: 12 Farm Dinners per year

- **Per current Agritourism guidelines:**
 - *From D. Agritourism Guidelines; 1. Agritourism Uses and Activities that Require a Permit; 5. Commercial Dining Events (pg 5-6):*
 - Commercial food service to groups with issuance of an Environmental Health permit and fire review occurring on an infrequent basis shall be allowed without the need of a PAD permit unless otherwise required.*

- *For purposes of this section, infrequent is defined as no more than twelve (12) meal servings per calendar year.
 - All other commercial food services not meeting the standards above may occur with the issuance of a PAD permit.
 - Commercial dining events cannot occur simultaneously with any temporary or seasonal agritourism event.
- **Subcommittee Discussion Questions:**
 - *As an alternative to unlimited, do we want to recommend something like: up to ____ (24) per year (doubling current amount), not to exceed ____ (4) farm dinner events per month?*
 - *How could the Planning Dept verify and check what will be served at farm dinners to ensure local ingredients? Could this potentially create additional layers of oversight when the desire is to have no permit/oversight?*
 - *Do we want to add an attendee cap to help guide future ag-tourism activities? Or do we want to leave it undefined? What is the benefit to having a defined or undefined number of attendees in the guidelines?*
- **Notes on Subcommittee Recommendations:**
 - **Event Type:** Interested in creating a preference for farm dinner events that feature what is produced on the farm hosting the dinner/ locally sourced food; note related language from the county’s Farm Stand Guidelines reads, “main part of main course is from San Mateo County;” explored requiring that a “majority of dishes served will feature products from San Mateo County” as part of a goal to promote local agriculture, where violations would be addressed via complaints.
 - **Frequency:** currently capped at 12 per year; we discussed preference for unlimited amount of farm dinners, however Agritourism Guidelines require limits in ‘scale, location, and time’; further discussion explored 24-30 farm dinners per year with no more than 8 per month, or 48 farm dinners per year, which would allow 2 farm dinners per weekend for 6 months.
 - **Attendees:** no current cap on attendees in existing guidelines, but Planning Dept does consider number of attendees when reviewing ag-tourism permits; we discussed capping attendees at up to 200 or in alignment with public safety guidelines, allowing “what the property can reasonably accommodate,” and leaving the attendees regulations as is.
 - **Facilities:** discussed that agritourism events should take place in existing structures on the property that do not require new development/construction, and that cooking facilities need to either be existing commercial kitchens or temporary structures.

January 28, 2021 AAC Subcommittee Meeting Notes

Definitions/Input from County

- **Agritourism:** The act of visiting a working farm/ranch or agricultural operation for the purpose of enjoyment, education or active involvement in the activities of the farm/ranch or agricultural operation that adds to the economic viability of the agricultural operation
 - *Note: Agritourism uses must be “secondary and supplemental to existing agricultural uses of the land”*
- County processes permits based on the impact of the activity on land/community, and not whether the event is commercial or non-commercial, etc.
- Educational farm tours currently fall under grey area of ag-tourism guidelines: “Other recreational/educational activities subject to review and approval of the Community Development Director”

Input from Ag Ombudsman

- Strongly in favor of revisiting guidelines to better reflect evolution of agritourism activities (that do not require significant impact/development)
- Types of agtourism activities people have expressed interest in (that aren't already covered in the existing guidelines): Educational tours, food trucks serving prepared food grown on farm, farm stays, semi-regular events like student tours/yoga classes, U-picks, CSA membership days, volunteer work days (planting/harvesting), peer-to-peer farmer/rancher demos/workshops, and environmental education events
- Additional Notes: temporary events are limited to 45 days twice per year; farm dinners and other non-agricultural commercial events are limited to 12 per year, with more requiring a full PAD permit (costing roughly \$7000); U-picks don't need permits (but county still needs parking/ops plan); CSA membership days with no extra charge is a primary agricultural activity; and the type of environmental education activity determines the required permit type
- Discussed idea to conduct a short survey (5 questions) about agritourism guidelines to gather qualitative/quantitative data on what ag community wants re: agritourism updates

References/Resources:

- [SMC Agritourism Guidelines](#) (website/downloadable file)
- [UCANR's California Agritourism](#) (website)
- [Food Tourism Book](#) (downloadable file)
- [Temporary Events](#) (downloadable file)

Discussion Points

- All suggested changes need to be based in existing wording of Agritourism Guidelines, with consideration for bigger changes that could trigger an LCP amendment - need to keep suggestions narrow, grounded & concise

- Recommendations need to be as SPECIFIC as possible, with clear metrics regarding # of participants, # of events per year/days, traffic load/impact, parking needs, etc.

Subcommittee Member Suggestions

- General recommendation to consult with those who wrote those regs, Supervisor Don Horsley & Farm Bureau Manager Jess Brown for clarification on current ag-tourism regs
- Interest in adding language to agritourism guidelines about: encouraging/pre-approving non-commercial, education focused events
- Suggestion to specify: "standard farm tours are simply marketing for the agricultural business and/or agricultural product sold, not ag tourism or ancillary ag activities."
- Recommendation that the following event types NOT require special permit, and DO require notification to county of with proposed dates/#'s expected guests/traffic load, perhaps capped at 12 annually: Walkabout tours/farm open house days (where no special construction/development on the land is required); volunteer days to help with harvest, planting, maintenance; educational workshops/presentations or activity circles; farm stands or retail shop sales of on-farm or locally made food products (including Adria's note about food trucks being parked close by featuring produce from farm); pick your own days; and CSA pick up activities
- Recommendation that one-off events using existing buildings not on prime soil and food is catered from off-site sources (limit 12 annually; notify county of # guests/traffic load but no permit): Farm to table dinners; independent group or community meetings; special occasion social events such as weddings, private celebrations; retreats requiring overnight stays and food service
 - If food is catered by the host farm, then some form of permit and inspection of the kitchen facilities should be required for health purposes.
- Recommendation that the following activities be allowed WITHOUT PERMIT whether paid or free: Farm Tours; All ag and food related educational activities, programs, workshops, trainings, gatherings including meals. (up to 200 people?); All environmental, open space and nature related educational activities, programs, workshops, hikes, nature walks, nature studies, tours, gatherings including meals. (up to 200 people?); Farm food and meals using local produce & meat; Year round local produce & meat sales similar to farm stands and farmer's markets; Sales of ag, environmental, ranching, nature supplies, etc. such as how to books, seeds, beekeeping equipment, birdhouses, chicken supplies, feed, planters, mushroom growing kits, native plants, flower growing kits etc.
- Recommendation that the following activities be allowed WITH PERMIT whether paid or free: Ag Tourism that includes non-ag or non-environmental/nature/open space activities such as train rides, bouncy houses, train rides etc; The currently allowed two 45-day permit periods per year may be spread over the entire year such as only on weekends, Tuesday/Thursday, every Sunday, one week per month etc.
 - Questions: Should ag/ranch/open space production be required on the property for any or all of the activities above? Should any of these activities be included in the definition of ag/ranch/open space?

Agritourism Conversation Notes from 01/11/21 AAC Meeting

- Educational farm tours fall under grey area of ag-tourism guidelines – ‘subject to review and approval of the Community Development Director’
 - No desire to create extra bureaucratic approval process for farm tours from farmers or organizers, especially for a free/educational event like Tour de Fleur
 - Standard farm tours are marketing for core agriculture activities, not ag-tourism
- Interest in adding language to Ag-tourism guidelines about encouraging/pre-approving non-commercial, education focused events
- County processes permits based on the impact of the activity on land/community, and not whether event is commercial or non-commercial
- From Adria, SMC Ag Ombudsman:
 - Narrow list of activities in the ag-tourism guidelines, and gets different answers from county on interpretations – confusion about how education events are misinterpreted in policy
 - Seeking clarity that is more open/allowing for education activities
 - Long history of inviting people onto farms and ranches both for public and for peer education among ag community – critical for our farms that need secondary income
 - Guidelines don’t reflect where ag-tourism guidelines are going in California and what direction local community wants to take it in (ie CSA pickups on farms)
 - Strongly in favor of revisiting guidelines that better reflect what is currently happening and more focused on the opportunities that exist (that don’t require significant impact/development)
- ACC to provide specific recommendations to county about how to improve ag-tourism guidelines, will form subcommittee

NOTE: Need established thresholds for farm tours/educational tours

Notes from Adria Arko, SMC Ag Ombudsman:

Agritourism – The act of visiting a working farm/ranch or agricultural operation for the purpose of **enjoyment, education or active involvement in the activities of the farm/ranch or agricultural operation** that adds to the economic viability of the agricultural operation.
County: secondary to the agricultural uses of the land.

Types of Ag Tourism that people have expressed interest in:

Farm-to-table dinners

Educational tours

On-off events, like harvest events, fairs, weddings, meetings, retreats
Food truck parked near farm stand showcasing food grown on farm
Farm stays (CA has regulations for this type of activity)
Semi-regular events, like tours/classes for school children, yoga classes
Café
Store
U-pick
CSA membership day
Volunteer event helping to plant, harvest, etc.
Farmer-farmer demo/learning event

Comments from County regarding Ag Tourism:

Farm to table events are akin to weddings, so are exempt from AAC but these types of events are limited to 12 per year. After that, they require a full PAD, which is ~\$7000
Events that don't require permits may require operations plans be submitted to planning.
There is a difference between commercial and not commercial events and public and private events - makes no difference for ag tourism guidelines
U Pick don't need permits. Planning doesn't care unless you are building structure. Planning still wants to know about parking, operations plan.
Depends on the type of environmental education activities that determines whether a permit is required.
Inviting CSA members with no charge does not need a permit (they are within your network, so its not a public event).
Events temporary are 45 days to allow for set up, event and take down. Designed around pumpkin festival.

Resources:

<https://ucanr.edu/sites/agritourism/>

Attachments:

1. Food Tourism Book:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/18d8uEfiIwSsHoZMj0WQrQtWJUPEBh7hG/view?usp=sharing>

2. Temporary Events:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1cYGSrUvEufxpjGH9JhzicnBNB7fCvJQm/view?usp=sharing>

Notes from Natalie Sare, AAC Member:

Thank you Lauren for providing your meeting notes and sharing. In that where it says "*Standard farm tours are marketing for core agriculture activities, not ag-tourism.*" I would like to expand on that. While I

think we are thinking the same thing, I believe it was expressed at the meeting, and I believe it to be, that farm tours are simply marketing the agriculture product that the farmer sells. While the growing of the crop is in a fact the core ag activity, as you wrote, I think we should write it more specifically. Selling and marketing of the agricultural crop/product that one grows is not an agriculture "activity" but instead it is simply the farmer's crop and/or ag business and ALL *activities* are all ancillary to that. While we are on the Right track-In my opinion we have to take it a step further separate "activities" from the agricultural product and business very specifically to avoid confusion.

B.J. stated at the meeting - currently and historically we do not need a permit to run our ag business and grow and sell our crop (other then the typical business licenses, pesticide regs if applicable, zoning laws and other regs we adhere to). Bringing the public in to see our product is simply marketing our ag-business and it is important that we keep it that way.

So I would like to propose we write that "*standard farm tours are simply marketing for the agricultural business and/or agricultural product sold, not ag tourism or ancillary ag activities.*"

To add to this: There are many farms that do not partake in agri-tourism; farms that sell wholesale, farms that live in too rural an area to make it worthwhile to do so, farmers who dont make enough money to invest in agri-tourism, and farms that simply do not want to join the barrage of bouncy houses and other carnival stuff. Yet they need to be able to market their product and having people come into the farm to see it is often the best form of marketing as well as the least expensive and as such needs to be allowed just as other businesses are allowed to bring people in to see their product being made, without restriction or regulation. While I understand the product itself is regulated- this basic form of marketing one's product or ag-business should not be regulated in this way as the AAC committee felt at the last meeting. That would absolutely have an unnecessarily adverse effect on agricultural sales and viability in this county going forward.

Bringing people into one's ag business and showing them crop production is the most accessible form of marketing, agriculture and all businesses, have and restricting that would be detrimental to:

A) Ag- business in this county. As many farmers dont have the means to advertise in the traditional sense, especially those just starting out.

B) Ag education. As we have learned from past meetings, it is extremely important that we continue to show children what agriculture is, especially those that would otherwise not have access. The best way to do this is to help current farmers show their product to others.

C) The chamber of Commerce and others who depend on agri-tourism for their fundraisers as was discussed at the last meeting.

D) To the public. The agri-tourism guidelines call for two 45 day periods. Crop production is a year round endeavor that implements different things at different stages of the growth of the product. As such we need to be able to share with the public as much as we can about agriculture. Only being allowed to show them the crop at a couple 45 day snippets denies the public access to learning about the crop correctly, and completely falsifies what we are showing.

What we should do:

*For any clarification on current ag-tourism regs we should consult with those who wrote those regs. We are fortunate in that Peter Marchi is on our committee and he was one of the people who wrote the current regs we use along with Tiera Pena from the county and former committee members.

*Listen to our Supervisors, as Don Horsely reportedly stated that he agrees that bringing people into the farms and agri-businesses is a form of marketing the product and/or ag-business and should continue to not be a part of the agri-tourism regulations.

*Look at what Farm Bureau rep, Jess Brown, stated at the last meeting -that San Mateo County is the most restrictive regarding regs for agriculture.

And use the above in our write up.

Notes from Judee Humburg, AAC Member:

Following are my ideas/suggestions for the meeting tomorrow evening:

From my own experience organizing farm visits/walkabouts, volunteer days, and various workshops for learning about farming practices (sometimes including a picnic lunch/dinner prepared with local/farm produce), I support both Natalie's and BJ's thoughts about these types of events being primarily (a) educational related to agricultural practices or (b) forms of community outreach/marketing for the farms. In many cases, these events create supplemental income for farmers which is important to sustain ag on the coast. As such, I propose no permit be required for these activities but perhaps a notification to the county about dates and #'s of expected guests/traffic load. My assumption is that these events are supplemental to the primary agricultural business on the property.

One distinction Adria made in our conversation was whether or not the event required any 'special development' on the land that would in any way limit agricultural activity on prime soil. To adhere to the intentions of the agritourism guidelines, permits should be required in these instances. For supplemental income (and as a form of marketing), I know some farms already host off-site group/corporate meetings and special events like weddings that include some food prep with local farm products but the buildings used are already on the farm on non-prime soil land. In these cases, require an annual permit with up to 12 for the year at a reasonable cost. If on-going 'catering' is part of these event offerings where food is being prepared on site routinely, then there likely needs to be an annual inspection to ensure the kitchen is up to health codes.

SUMMARY:

No special permit required but notification to county of with proposed dates/#'s expected guests/traffic load, perhaps capped at 12 annually:

- walkabout tours/farm open house days (where no special construction/development on the land is required)
- volunteer days to help with harvest, planting, maintenance
- educational workshops/presentations or activity circles
- farm stands or retail shop sales of on-farm or locally made food products (including Adria's note about food trucks being parked close by featuring produce from farm)
- pick your own days
- CSA pick up activities

one-off events that use existing buildings not on prime soil and food is catered from off-site sources (limit 12 annually; notify county of # guests/traffic load but no permit)

- farm to table dinners
- independent group or community meetings
- special occasion social events such as weddings, private celebrations
- retreats requiring overnight stays and food service

If food is catered by the host farm, then some form of permit and inspection of the kitchen facilities should be required for health purposes.

Thanks, Lauren, for compiling!! I hope I've gotten everything from my notes. If not, I'm sure the meeting will surface questions. The most uncertainty for me is related to the # of events, people/event and traffic load — at what point to require a more expensive permit maybe with on-site inspection. I don't feel I have the 'technical' experience to really have an answer.

Just remembered...I forgot to add a suggestion that Adria and I came up when we talked on Monday. She indicated that a survey might be a good idea (maybe using her newsletter list and the email/member lists for the Farm Bureau) to get qualitative and quantitative info on what folks are most interested in (or already involved in) and what their concerns might be. I'm happy to draft something for others' editing as that's what I used to do for a living (customer research for tech product design). Depends on if the subcommittee agrees this would be useful. Adria also indicated that she saw this process as taking awhile to go through the various steps and parties' reviews so that we would have time for a very short survey — I'm thinking no more than 5 questions. Thoughts?

Notes from Bill Cook, AAC Member:

Here are my initial thoughts:

Activities allowed WITHOUT PERMIT whether paid or free:

- Farm Tours
- All ag and food related educational activities, programs, workshops, trainings, gatherings including meals. (up to 200 people?)
- All environmental, open space and nature related educational activities, programs, workshops, hikes, nature walks, nature studies, tours, gatherings including meals. (up to 200 people?)
- Farm food and meals using local produce & meat.
- Year round local produce & meat sales similar to farm stands and farmer's markets
- Sales of ag, environmental, ranching, nature supplies, etc. such as how to books, seeds, beekeeping equipment, birdhouses, chicken supplies, feed, planters, mushroom growing kits, native plants, flower growing kits etc.

Activities allowed WITH PERMIT whether paid or free:

- Ag Tourism that includes non-ag or non-environmental/nature/open space activities such as train rides, bouncy houses, train rides etc.
- The currently allowed two 45-day permit periods per year may be spread over the entire year such as only on weekends, Tuesday/Thursday, every Sunday, one week per month etc.

All appropriate food safety, parking safety and building permits will be enforced.

Questions:

Should ag/ranch/open space production be required on the property for any or all of the activities above? (I am thinking not but wat to hear your thoughts)

Should any of these activities be included in the definition of ag/ranch/open space?

Notes from Peter Marchi, AAC Member:

I, Peter Marchi, support the current Agritourism Guidelines as they Stand with nothing less.

I would like one addition and that is a ninety day nonconsecutive days of agritourism to support the farmer that does not have consecutive people traffic. For example weekends and/or CSA pick-ups on farms et cetera.

Solely farm related events should be permit free such as educational farm tours et cetera.

February 17, 2021 AAC Agritourism Subcommittee Notes

Note: Existing Agritourism Guidelines available [here](#).

- Length/Frequency of Agritourism Uses: 45 consecutive day events twice per year
 - **Per current Agritourism guidelines:**
 - i. Allow temporary agritourism uses and facilities on all agricultural lands, but *limit them in scale, location, and time*. Require staff level review to confirm temporary uses are consistent with these guidelines.
 - ii. Uses that occur for more than 45 consecutive days or more than two (2) times per year require a Planned Agricultural District Permit, or a Resource Management Permit, a Coastal Development Permit, and review by the Agricultural Advisory Committee.
 - **Notes on Subcommittee Recommendations:**
 - i. **Event Type:** agritourism events are limited by the length and frequency of the event to 45 consecutive days twice per year
 - ii. **Frequency:** we discussed allowing one 90 consecutive day event per year; non-consecutive day events were also discussed
 - iii. **Attendees:** not discussed, current guidelines do not limit or qualify agritourism events based on number of attendees/participants
 - **Discussion Questions:**
 - i. *Is this secondary to ag on site? Is it limited in scale, location & time?*
 - ii. *Does the amount of people onsite constitute an impact? To traffic, soils, neighbors? Is the impact limited in duration or is there a cumulative impact?*
 - iii. *Would this trigger a PAD or LCP permit?*
 - iv. *If the days are non-consecutive, would this constitute year round use?*
 - v. *Would changing this conflict with existing PAD regulations?*

Meeting #2 Notes:

- Two 45 consecutive days or 12 non-consecutive events not to exceed 7 days or
 - Something that allows summer weekends?
- What prime agricultural use would require 12 7-day events per year?
 - Harvesting vegetables

- Farm Dinners
 - **Per current Agritourism guidelines:**
 - i. *From D. Agritourism Guidelines; 1. Agritourism Uses and Activities that Require a Permit; 5. Commercial Dining Events (pg 5-6):*
 - ii. Commercial food service to groups with issuance of an Environmental Health permit and fire review occurring on an infrequent basis shall be allowed without the need of a PAD permit unless otherwise required.*

1. *For purposes of this section, infrequent is defined as no more than twelve (12) meal servings per calendar year.
 - iii. All other commercial food services not meeting the standards above may occur with the issuance of a PAD permit.
 - iv. Commercial dining events cannot occur simultaneously with any temporary or seasonal agritourism event.
- **Notes on Subcommittee Recommendations:**
 - i. **Event Type:** Interested in creating a preference for farm dinner events that feature what is produced on the farm hosting the dinner/ locally sourced food
 - ii. **Frequency:** currently capped at 12 per year; we discussed preference for unlimited amount of farm dinners, however Agritourism Guidelines require limits in 'scale, location, and time'
 - iii. **Attendees:** no current cap on attendees in existing guidelines, but Planning Dept does consider number of attendees when reviewing ag-tourism permits; we discussed capping attendees at up to 200 or in alignment with public safety guidelines
 - **Discussion Questions:**
 - i. *How could the Planning Dept verify and check what will be served at farm dinners to ensure this? Could this potentially create additional layers of oversight when the desire is to have no permit/oversight?*
 - ii. *Do we want to add an attendee cap to help guide future ag-tourism activities? Or do we want to leave it undefined? What is the benefit to having a defined or undefined number of attendees in the guidelines?*
 - iii. *As an alternative to unlimited, do we want to recommend something like: up to ____ (24) per year (doubling current amount), not to exceed ____ (4) farm dinner events per month?*

Meeting #2 Notes:

- Want to create situation where farms could host an event every summer weekend
 - Interest in 24-30 per year but no more than 8 per month, one day event
 - Bill's Suggestion: 48 farm dinners per year, which would allow two farm dinners per weekend for 6 months
- Want to create preference/goal to feature produce grown in SMC
 - Note from Farm Stand language: "main part of main course is from SMC" or "majority of dishes served will feature products from SMC" as part of goal to promote local agriculture
 - To enforce, county would take word of farmer unless there is complaint
 - What if a farmer wants to host an event on a neighbor's property (ie one who may have better facilities?)
- Attendees: "what the property can reasonably accommodate;" leave as is in regs
- Agritourism events should take place in existing structures on the property, and not require new buildings/development/construction
 - Re: commercial kitchens - cooking facilities need to be temporary

- Educational Activities
 - **Per current Agritourism guidelines:**
 - i. Other recreational/educational activities subject to review and approval of the Community Development Director.
 - **Notes on Subcommittee Recommendations:**
 - i. **Event Type:** Interested in adding further definition to what constitutes an 'recreational/educational activity' in existing guidelines, particularly regarding educational activities; we discussed that educational events should be regarding the environment, agriculture, nature, or food
 - ii. **Frequency:** we discussed limiting to 12 annually or having no limit on frequency, and instead limiting amount of participants
 - iii. **Attendees:** we discussed limiting number of attendees instead of limited frequency of events annually
 - **Discussion Questions:**
 - i. *How to define 'educational activity' allowed without an Agritourism Permit? Is this a class, a tour, a workshop, etc? Does it need to be connected to a school or other formal educational group - or just by the curriculum/content of the educational activity?*
 - 1. *Does the educational activity have to be about the farm/ranch that is hosting the event? Does it have to be about the prime agricultural activity taking place at that farm/ranch?*
 - ii. *What thresholds could be recommended for educational activities? Number of attendees and/or frequency of the educational event?*
 - 1. *What thresholds would ensure that educational activities are secondary to the primary agricultural use?*
 - 2. *What is a reasonable threshold that would allow most educational activities without an Agritourism Permit but have limits in place for outliers/unusual events?*

Meeting #2 Notes:

- Educational activities currently under grey area because lack definition
- Is there a distinction between educational activities and farm tours?
- Educational Activities:
 - Seminars, tours, field walks, presentations, classes AND farm tours
 - Open Houses vs Farm Tours
 - About the farm or ranch hosting event, related to ag/ranching activities
 - Alternate approach: about the specific ag/ranch hosting event could be too limiting - about ag/ranching generally
 - Gathering or receiving a benefit from the instruction
 - No age range limitations, open to everybody
- K/Other Recreational/educational activities is currently being used as catch-all by county

- Main purpose of the LCP is to support ag & environment
 - Educational activities allowed on PAD properties on the coast; about agriculture, environment, nature
- Concerns about farms turning into venues in PAD
 - Levels/thresholds for No Permit; Agtourism Permit; PAD Permit
 - i. **No Permit:** about core ag/ranching activity on property; peer-to-peer prof dev workshops, etc; farm tours showcasing that property;
 - 1. No more than 10/20/30/40 people? Per acre? Per what property can reasonably accommodate?
 - 2. When does it become 'intensive use' beyond the core ag activity?
 - ii. **Agtourism Permit:** brings public to property at defined frequency (by single day or consecutive day event)
 - 1. Not more than the property/space can reasonably accommodate
 - a. Amount of people based on what space can handle
 - b. Without making a (negative) impact
 - 2. No more than 40/50 people? Per instructor? Per what property can accommodate?
 - iii. **PAD Permit:** anything beyond agtourism frequency
 - 1. Beyond 50?
 - iv. Alternate Option: no permits required for any educational activity
- Gathering to receive a benefit from instruction about environment, agriculture, nature, or food
 - Relation to PAD activities?
- Threshold Options:
 - What are current thresholds for educational events in the county? Safety guidelines?
 - i. County looks at potential activity; looking at Building Code, Fire Code & planning discretion
 - ii. Does the amount of people onsite constitute an impact? To traffic, soils, neighbors?
 - Limitations on number of attendees?
 - 'Not more than the property can reasonably accommodate'
 - Classes/workshops normally around 30-40
 - What about the existing thresholds in the agritourism guidelines (ie scenic corridor)?
- Farm Tours
 - **Per current Agritourism guidelines:**
 - i. Other recreational/educational activities subject to review and approval of the Community Development Director.
 - **Notes on Subcommittee Recommendations:**
 - i. **Event Type:** we discussed the difference between farm tours as marketing for agriculture vs. farm tours as educational events

- ii. **Frequency:** not discussed
- iii. **Attendees:** not discussed
- **Discussion Questions**
 - i. *How do we define farm tours? How is this different from an educational activity as discussed above?*
 - ii. *Do we want to add a further distinction here between educational activities? If so, what would the limits be?*
 - 1. *Are these free events or ticketed/at cost to attendees?*
 - 2. *Is a group of 10 or fewer people a farm tour? Would more than 10 people make it an educational event? Would farm tours be for more than 20 people at a time?*

Meeting #2 Notes:

- List of example educational activities
- Is there a benefit to having separate definitions for educational activity vs farm tour?
 - Tour is about that specific farm/ranch and activities taking place there
 - Educational event is beyond that
 - Not defined by commercial activity (fee/ticket)
 - Not limited by day of the week/weekend
- Tours are hard for farmers because it takes time out of the work day; anyway we can streamline for farmer would be a help
 - Example: Allowing several classes at once would help streamline for farmer
- Peer-to-Peer Educational Activities for Farmers/Ranchers
 - **Per current Agritourism guidelines:**
 - i. Other recreational/educational activities subject to review and approval of the Community Development Director.
 - **Notes on Subcommittee Recommendations:**
 - i. **Event Type:** we discussed including this activity under the educational activities; alternatively could be defined as professional development
 - ii. **Frequency:** not discussed
 - iii. **Attendees:** not discussed
 - **Discussion Questions**
 - i. *How do we define peer-to-peer educational activities? How is this different from an educational activity as discussed above?*
 - ii. *Do we want to add a further distinction here between educational activities? If so, what would the limits be?*

Meeting #2 Notes:

- Allowed by right without an agritourism permit
- Example: CCTGA event hosted with up to 80 people
- Same note re: streamlining for farmers; figuring out how to allow multiple presentations at one time; potential limit based on instructor/acreage, not attendees

- U-Pick Farm Activities
 - **Per current Agritourism guidelines:**
 - i. Other recreational/educational activities subject to review and approval of the Community Development Director.
 - **Notes on Subcommittee Recommendations:**
 - i. **Event Type:** we believe this is a core agricultural activity and does not need to be included in the agritourism guidelines
 - ii. **Frequency:** n/a
 - iii. **Attendees:** n/a
 - **Discussion Questions**
 - i. *Do we want to add this to the list of allowed uses without a permit in the Agritourism Guidelines and specify that no ag-tourism permit is required?*

Meeting #2 Notes:

- Allowed by right without an agritourism permit

- Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) Member Activities
 - **Per current Agritourism guidelines:**
 - i. Other recreational/educational activities subject to review and approval of the Community Development Director.
 - **Notes on Subcommittee Recommendations:**
 - i. **Event Type:** we believe that this is a core agricultural activity, but need to further define what constitutes a CSA member activity vs an agritourism activity (ie picking up boxes, volunteer hours, etc.); we discussed limiting to non-ticketed/free events for CSA members
 - ii. **Frequency:** n/a
 - iii. **Attendees:** n/a
 - **Discussion Questions**
 - i. *What is the definition of CSA Member Activities?*
 - 1. *Note: Please see [USDA Community Supported Agriculture](#) resources page for reference.*
 - ii. *Do we want to add this to the list of allowed uses without a permit in the Agritourism Guidelines and specify that no ag-tourism permit is required?*

Meeting #2 Notes:

- Activities covered under CSA membership considered core agriculture; agritourism permit may be required if other types of activities are proposed (ie farm dinners)
 - Perhaps excluding farm dinners?

- Volunteer Service Events
 - **Per current Agritourism guidelines:**

- i. Other recreational/educational activities subject to review and approval of the Community Development Director.
- **Notes on Subcommittee Recommendations:**
 - i. **Event Type:** discussed one-off volunteer day events at farms/ranches, such as planting/harvest days
 - ii. **Frequency:** not discussed
 - iii. **Attendees:** discussed not exceeding public safety guidelines for number of attendees
- **Discussion Questions**
 - i. *How do we define a 'volunteer event' or 'service days' and ensure this activity doesn't bleed into other agritourism activity types?*
 - ii. *What definition would prevent these volunteer events from being abused/stretched to fit other activity types? (ie a volunteer work day rolling into a farm dinner as defined by the existing guidelines)*

Meeting #2 Notes:

- Suggestion that (non-commercial) volunteerism activities generally do not require agritourism permit
 - Examples: barn raising event, work days on open space property, help around a farm/ranch like pulling weeds, etc.
 - Any additional activities associated with volunteering subject to review/approval
- Discussion re: defining 'volunteer service event'
 - Consider impact to the land, could we define volunteer activities as things that improve the property/agricultural operations (don't make negative impact)
 - Discussed commercial vs non-commercial or public vs private
- Food Trucks
 - **Per current Agritourism guidelines:**
 - i. One (1) food vendor, mobile or on-site including mobile prepackaged food/snack bar (Environmental Health permit required) located on all soils.
 - ii. One (1) prepackaged food/snack bar on non-prime soils (may be subject to Environmental Health permit).
 - **Notes on Subcommittee Recommendations:**
 - i. **Event Type:** interested in allowing food trucks that showcase farm product as an allowed activity at agritourism events, specifically discussed food trucks parked near farm stands that feature the food/products grown onsite at that particular farm
 - ii. **Frequency:** was discussed in context of 45 consecutive day events
 - iii. **Attendees:** was discussed in context of 45 consecutive day events
 - **Discussion Questions**

- i. **Note:** San Mateo County has an existing ordinance regulated mobile food, so the Agritourism Guidelines cannot be in conflict with the existing regulations:
 1. SMC Health [Mobile Food Facilities](#)
 2. SMC Code of Ordinances, Title 5 Business Regulations, [Chapter 5.52 Mobile Food Preparation Units](#)
 - a. *Note: limited to thirty (30) minutes in one location during any eight (8) hour period, sales must be located on a County road*
- ii. *What changes to existing guidelines are needed here? Does current wording around one food vendor or one snack bar already meet our needs here?*

Meeting #2 Notes:

- Current wording works as is
- Desire to decouple the food trucks from the agricultural tourism activity - will revisit in context of the farm stand conversation (coming up at future AAC meeting)

SAN MATEO COUNTY AGRITOURISM GUIDELINES

The San Mateo County Planning and Building Department and the San Mateo County Agricultural Advisory Committee's subcommittee on agritourism have developed the following guidelines for the review and establishment of commercial activities on agricultural land. These guidelines seek to provide guidance regarding the application of existing Local Coastal Program (LCP) policies and zoning regulations in a manner that facilitates the establishment of uses that are **secondary** to the agricultural uses of the land, support the economic viability of farming and ranching, and minimize conflicts with agricultural activities on said lands and/or adjacent lands. These guidelines are not intended to obviate the need for compliance with other State or Federal regulations. (Agritourism review procedures are addressed in Part F of this document.)

A. DEFINITIONS

1. **Agritourism** – The act of visiting a working farm/ranch or agricultural operation for the purpose of enjoyment, education or active involvement in the activities of the farm/ranch or agricultural operation that adds to the economic viability of the agricultural operation.
2. **Compatible Use(s)** – A use that, as determined by the Community Development Director of San Mateo County, will not diminish or interfere with existing or potential agricultural productivity, and can be accommodated without adverse impact to the agricultural resources of the site or surrounding area.
3. **Non-Prime Agricultural Land** – Land that is not “prime agricultural land” as defined below. This may include, but is not limited to, land used for grazing or dry farming.
4. **Prime Agricultural Land** – Means any of the following:
 - a. All land that qualifies for rating as Class I or Class II in the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) Land Use Capability Classifications; or land that qualifies as Class III in the NRCS Land Use Capacity Classifications if producing no less than two hundred dollars (\$200) per acre annual gross income for three of the past five years.
 - b. Land which qualifies for rating 80 through 100 in the Storie Index Rating.
 - c. Land which supports livestock used for the production of food and fiber and which has an annual carrying capacity equivalent to at least one animal unit per acre as defined by the United States Department of Agriculture.

- d. Land planted with fruit- or nut-bearing trees, vines, bushes or crops which have a non-bearing period of less than five years and which will normally return during the commercial bearing period on an annual basis from the production of unprocessed agricultural plant production not less than two hundred dollars (\$200) per acre.
- e. Land which has returned from the production of unprocessed agricultural plant products an annual gross value of not less than two hundred dollars (\$200) per acre annual gross income for three of the past five years.
- f. In all cases, prime land shall have a secure water source adequate to support the agriculture on the premises.

B. COMPATIBILITY DETERMINATIONS

Any activity authorized by these guidelines may be made subject to a Use Permit at the discretion of the Community Development Director.

C. GOALS

- 1. Confirm that agritourism uses are secondary and supplemental to existing agricultural uses of the land.
- 2. Agritourism uses must be compatible with and beneficial to the agricultural uses on the land.
- 3. Allow temporary agritourism uses and facilities on all agricultural lands, but limit them in scale, location and time. Require staff level review to confirm temporary uses are consistent with these guidelines.
- 4. Limit percentage of lands utilized for agritourism.
- 5. Ensure the “Right to Farm” on all lands per Chapter 2.65 of the San Mateo County Ordinance (Administration/Agricultural Awareness).

D. AGRITOURISM GUIDELINES

- 1. **Agritourism Uses and Activities that Require a Permit.** Uses will be reviewed by Planning staff and the Agricultural Advisory Committee to ensure adherence to the guidelines.

Agritourism uses must be found to be compatible with the long-term agricultural uses of the land. Uses that occur for more than 45 consecutive days or more than two (2) times per year require a Planned Agricultural District Permit, or a Resource Management Permit, a Coastal Development Permit, and review by the Agricultural Advisory Committee.

MAINTAIN COMPATIBILITY WITH AGRICULTURE BY LIMITING ATTRACTIONS AND ACTIVITIES TO NO MORE THAN THE FOLLOWING:

- a. One (1) farm animal petting zoo on **non-prime soils**.
- b. One (1) pony ride area located on **non-prime soils** (confined animal permit or exemption required).
- c. One (1) food vendor, mobile or on-site (Environmental Health permit if applicable) located on **non-prime soils**.
- d. One (1) prepackaged food/snack bar on **non-prime soils**.
- e. One (1) haunted house/barn on **non-prime soils**.
- f. One (1) hay maze on **non-prime soils**.
- g. One (1) train and tracks located on **non-prime soils**.
- h. One (1) hayride on all soils.
- i. Train rides on rubberized wheels throughout all soils subject to case-by-case review.
- j. Inflatables* on **non-prime soils** (subject to height limitations set forth in the Planned Agricultural District and Resource Management Regulations) subject to case-by-case review.
- k. Produce stand permitted per Section 6352(5) of the Planned Agricultural District Regulations (Environmental Health permit required).
- l. Other recreational/educational activities subject to review and approval of the Community Development Director.
- m. Days and hours of operation per determination of the Community Development Director.

2. **Performance Standards for Agritourism Uses and Activities that Require a Permit.** Agritourism uses shall be consistent with LCP and zoning standards, including but not limited to the following:

- a. Adequate on-site parking to accommodate the uses must be provided on non-prime soils and designated on the site plan for review by Planning staff.

*Inflatables subject to the standards of the Safe Inflatable Operators Training Organization.

- b. Parking subject to standards of Policy 10.22 (*Parking*) of the LCP.
 - c. Signage subject to standards of Policy 8.21 (*Commercial Signs*) of the LCP.
 - d. On parcels forty (40) acres or more in size, all agritourism elements shall be clustered and shall consume no more than two (2) gross acres (excludes hayrides or trains with rubberized wheels). Parking is excluded from acreage calculation.
 - e. On parcels under forty (40) acres in size, all agritourism elements shall be clustered and shall consume no more than one (1) gross acre (excludes hayrides or trains with rubberized wheels). Parking is excluded from acreage calculation.
 - f. Setbacks subject to regulations pertaining to watercourses and riparian vegetation.
3. **Temporary Seasonal Agritourism Uses and Activities that Do Not Require Permits.** Temporary seasonal visitor serving uses and facilities allowed on all agricultural lands limited in scale, elements and time. Uses will be reviewed by Planning staff and the Agricultural Advisory Committee to ensure adherence to the guidelines.
- a. Does not interfere with agricultural production on or adjacent to the lot.
 - b. Allowed for a maximum of 45 consecutive days per use and limited to no more than two (2) per year.
 - c. Days and hours of operation: Sunday through Saturday from 9:00 a.m. to sunset (no lighting shall be allowed).
 - d. Two (2) inflatables* allowed on all lands (subject to height limits set forth in the Planned Agricultural District and Resource Management Regulations).
 - e. One (1) pony ride area (confined animal permit or exemption required).
 - f. One (1) farm animal petting zoo on all lands.
 - g. One (1) hayride on all lands.
 - h. One (1) train with rubberized wheels on all lands.

*Inflatables subject to the standards of the Safe Inflatable Operators Training Organization.

- i. One (1) food vendor, mobile or on-site including mobile prepackaged food/snack bar (Environmental Health permit required) located on all **soils**.
 - j. One (1) prepackaged food/snack bar on non-prime soils (may be subject to Environmental Health permit).
 - k. Other recreational/educational activities subject to review and approval of the Community Development Director.
4. **Performance Standards for Seasonal Uses and Activities that Do Not Require Permits**
- a. Adequate on-site parking to accommodate the temporary seasonal uses must be provided and designated on the site plan for review by Planning staff.
 - b. Parking subject to standards of Policy 10.22 (*Parking*) of the LCP.
 - c. Signage subject to standards of Policy 8.21 (*Commercial Signs*) of the LCP.
 - d. Meets the current standards for buffers from creeks and/or riparian vegetation.
 - e. On parcels forty (40) acres or more in size, all agritourism elements shall be clustered and shall consume no more than two (2) gross acres (excludes hayrides or trains with rubberized wheels). Parking is excluded from acreage calculation.
 - f. On parcels under forty (40) acres in size, all agritourism elements shall be clustered and shall consume no more than one (1) gross acre (excludes hayrides or trains with rubberized wheels). Parking is excluded from acreage calculation.
 - g. Setbacks subject to regulations pertaining to watercourses and riparian vegetation.
 - h. No land disturbance including import of gravel or fill.
 - i. Produce stand permitted per Section 6352(5) of the Planned Agricultural District Regulations (Environmental Health permit required).
5. **Commercial Dining Events**
- a. Commercial food service to groups with issuance of an Environmental Health permit and fire review occurring on an infrequent basis shall be allowed without the need of a PAD permit unless otherwise required.*

- b. All other commercial food services not meeting the standards above may occur with the issuance of a PAD permit.
- c. Commercial dining events cannot occur simultaneously with any temporary or seasonal agritourism event.

E. OTHER NON-AGRICULTURAL COMMERCIAL EVENTS

Commercial events on PAD lands require review by the Agricultural Advisory Committee to determine whether they constitute an agritourism event.

The following examples are uses when operated as a commercial business that are not considered agritourism and require County permits.

- Weddings.
- Music concerts.
- Paint ball.
- Carnivals.

*For purposes of this section, infrequent is defined as no more than twelve (12) meal servings per calendar year.

F. AGRITOURISM REVIEW PROCEDURES

For seasonal non-permit required event applications, applicants shall submit an application and accompanying materials to the Planning and Building Department two (2) months prior to desired date of event.

For seasonal permit required event applications, applicants shall submit an application and accompanying materials no later than six (6) months prior to desired date of event.

All application submittals are subject to the following:

1. Completion of permit application forms.
2. Submittal of any existing Williamson Contract on said lands.
3. Description of existing agricultural operations and statement of conformance with the goals of the agritourism standards.
4. Site plan showing existing permanent buildings and structures, all agricultural areas, watercourses, riparian areas and wells.
5. Site plan showing all agritourism uses and activities, and existing/proposed parking areas.

6. Statement of operations (days/hours).
7. Number of employees on-site for agritourism purposes.

G. RECOMMENDED FINDINGS

When considering proposals to establish agritourism uses, the Agricultural Advisory Committee and relevant decision makers should determine:

1. That the agritourism use is compatible with the long-term agricultural uses of the land.
2. That the agritourism operation will not adversely affect the health or safety of persons in the area and will not be materially detrimental to the public welfare or injurious to agricultural property.
3. That the agritourism operation is in substantial conformance with the goals set forth in the San Mateo County Agritourism Guidelines. Specifically, that the operation is secondary and supplemental to existing agricultural operation on said land.
4. That the proposed use and activities comply with all relevant provisions of the General Plan, Local Coastal Program, Zoning Regulations, and Williamson Act (where applicable).

TGP:fc/pac/jlh – TGPW0230_WFR.DOCX (9/25/12)