



Notes & Information for the West Virginia Agritourism Industry

**West Virginia Department of Agriculture
Marketing & Development Division
Gus R. Douglass, Commissioner**

December, 2007

In this edition:

- Upcoming Agritourism Short Course, January 9, 2008 in Charleston
- 2008 State Travel Guide
- West Virginia Agritourism in the News
- Call for newsworthy items and upcoming events
- Calendar of Events & Workshops

Mark Your Calendar!

Begin your new year with information and marketing ideas to make your 2008 agritourism efforts the best yet! The agenda features Pat Strader from Matterhorn Marketing discussing the importance of internet marketing to furthering your business. Pat was a featured speaker at the 2007 West Virginia Governor's Conference on Tourism. His straightforward, practical approach to internet marketing will give you the information and resources needed to integrate the web into your 2008 marketing plan. Geoff Heater from Opposum Retreat and the New River Convention & Visitors Bureau will discuss packaging, its importance to your enterprise success and leave you with tons of possible partners. Joe Stevens from Media One in Charleston will provide guidelines and formats to make your agritourism a "hot" item for the media. The theme is "Success in 2008" and two breakout sessions will feature West Virginia agritourism operators who are flourishing because of the visitor interest in the farm and our rural communities.

For a downloadable brochure, visit:

<http://www.wvagriculture.org/images/Marketing/AgBrochure.pdf>

To register, visit:

<http://www.wvagriculture.org/images/Marketing/AGRegistration.pdf>

2008 West Virginia State Travel Guide

Twenty-four West Virginia agritourism businesses and attractions participated in the first agritourism feature in the 2008 guide. Published by Miles Media for the Division of Tourism, more than 350,000 copies of this magazine are printed for distribution through the 800 CALL WVA call center, West Virginia Welcome Centers and other tourism trade events.

West Virginia Department of Agriculture Marketing & Development Director Jean Smith was pleased with the response. "The large response for the first time effort compliments the editorial commitment that the publication has made to promote the agritourism industry in the state. The participants will be able to generate leads, change inquiries to bookings and become part of the marketing effort of this important publication showcasing the state. The minimal participation fee makes it feasible for small West Virginia agribusinesses to be included."

Funding from the West Virginia Division of Tourism Cooperative Advertising Grant program and technical assistance from the Mountain Resource, Conservation & Development, Inc. (Mtn. RC&D) made the project possible. The cost of the full page ad was \$9,019.00. Participants paid a \$50.00 participation fees making the cost per placement .000143. Participants were able to get their business name and a contact listing (email or web address) in addition to traditional leads provided by the publication.

West Virginia Agritourism in the News

Gillum House was featured in *Grapevine* magazine. The Washington, DC based publication photographed the lodging facility and included many packages offered including the local winery.

Talbott's Black Oak Holler Farm in Frazier's Bottom, WV was featured in the November 28, 2007 *Washington Post*. The article "Better cured meat Begins On the Hoof at Home" discussed the culinary interest in duplication top-quality prosciutto production through a grazing method using nature forage ingredients such as acorns and hickory nuts to develop meat that is higher in fat and has an intense, woody flavor.

The *Beckley Register Herald* reported the bear damage at Ron Miller's corn maze attraction in Renick. The report pointed out a myriad of difficulties facing maze operators this season including predators and drought conditions.

The Division of Tourism approved internet marketing as an acceptable expense for cooperative matching advertising grants during its September 20, 2007 meeting. Exempt from the original legislation, the program now allows applicants to be reimbursed for specific internet expenditures including design and site reconfiguration fees. For more information, visit the Matching Advertising Partnership Program (MAPProgram) website at: <http://www.wvtourism.com/spec.aspx?pgID=34>

Brookedale Holstein Farm in Mineral County (owned and operated by Donnie Alt and Donna Brooke Alt) placed 2nd in the West Virginia Conservation Farm of the Year competition awarded by the West Virginia Soil Conservation Agency. The farm is an example of a diverse

agribusiness enterprise that hosts many school children in the fall as a part of their increasing agritourism programming.

John Cooper, President of the West Virginia Christmas Tree Growers Association and previous owner of Santa's Forest, was recently highlighted in a press release about his contribution to the Christmas tree industry and the incorporation of online tree ordering through consultation with current owner Luke & Jenna Wilbur.

The State Fair of West Virginia was voted one of the Top Events for 2008 by the American Bus Association. The ABA is the trade organization of intercity bus travel whose members include tour bus companies, charter buses, and scheduled service, and represent many segments of the travel and tourism industry in North America.

Upcoming Agritourism Features

Do you have a unique story to tell? Would you like to develop a marketing article that can be submitted to media outlets for publicity? We hope to feature successful agritourism enterprises and programs in the state for future newsletters. Please submit information or ideas to info@visitwvfarms.com for consideration as we work on a timeline for the upcoming year. Events, festivals and other programs that may be of interest to agritourism enterprises and in upcoming press releases should also be submitted to this email for inclusion and distribution to media outlets....let us know what is happening so we can get the word out!

In our next addition, look for information on a unique collaborative effort in Preston County that feature enterprises in West Virginia and Maryland, a cooperative brochure and sharing of resources to help each member become successful in the agritourism arena.

Calendar of Events

- | | |
|----------------------|--|
| January 9, 2008 | West Virginia Agritourism Short Course
Charleston Civic Center, Charleston, WV
Contact info@visitwvfarms.com |
| January 11-12, 2008 | West Virginia Association of Fairs & Festivals
Annual Convention
Charleston Civic Center, Charleston, WV
Contact dgard@ag.state.wv.us |
| February 15-20, 2008 | North American Farmer's Direct Marketing
Conference
Wisconsin Dells, Wisconsin
Contact http://www.nafdma.org |
| February 26-28, 2008 | West Virginia Small Farms Conference
Ramada Inn, Morgantown, WV
Contact TRMcConnell@mail.wvu.edu |