



2015 Georgia Agritourism Annual Conference

February 16-18
Rainwater Conference Center
Valdosta, GA

FULL CONFERENCE SCHEDULE

All activities occur at The Rainwater Conference Center, Valdosta, GA unless otherwise stated

Monday, February 16

6:45 a.m. Registration Opens at the Rainwater Conference Center

1 Meeting Place, Valdosta, GA

7:15 a.m. Agritourism Farm Tour Buses Depart

Buses depart from the front of the Rainwater Conference Center

Raisin' Cane, Valdosta

**Breakfast provided at Raisin Cane*

You-Pick – Petting Zoo – Corn Maze – Pumpkin Patch – Event Venue – Little-Ville (for kids) – Field Trips – Produce Market – Country Kitchen – Commercial Farm: Satsuma, Hydroponic Greenhouse, Seasonal Fruits and Vegetables

Thompson Farms Smoke House, Dixie

Pork Farm – Butcher – Processor – Retail Market – Jellies/Jams/Sauces

Frogtown Cellars, Hahira

Multi-Location Vineyard/Winery/Tasting Room – Bistro – Retail Market – Wedding/Event Venue

Gin Creek, Hartsfield

Wedding/Event Venue – Fishing – Hunting – Skeet – Lodging – Zip Line into the Pond – Vineyard/Winery/Tasting Room

Sparkman's Cream Valley, Moultrie

Dairy – Creamery – Store Front – Farm/Dairy Tours

Ochlockonee Ridge Farms, Moultrie

You-Pick Strawberries – School Tours – Beef Cattle

Horse Creek Winery, Sparks

Muscadine Vineyard – Multi-Location Vineyard/Winery/Tasting Room – Restaurant – Banquet Hall – Wedding/Event Venue – Gift Shop

5:30 p.m. Georgia Grown Reception

Featuring Participants from GA Grown Trails Hwy 37 and Hwy 41

Dinner at Horse Creek Winery, Sparks

Welcome, Drew Echols, President, GA Agritourism Association

The Story of Horse Creek Winery, Ed Perry, Horse Creek Winery
Origin, Success and Future of Georgia Grown Trails Hwy 37 and Hwy 41, Jerry Connell, Adel
Cook County Chamber

8:30 p.m. Buses Depart Horse Creek Winery

9:00 p.m. Agritourism Farm Tour Buses Return to Rainwater Conference Center

Hospitality Suite Open

Fairfield Inn & Suites

NOTE: Light snacks, water, and soft drinks provided. Everyone is welcome to provide additional snacks and drinks, games, cards, and entertainment!

**Farm tours are included in full registration for the 2015 Georgia Agritourism Annual Conference hosted by the Georgia Agritourism Association*

Tuesday, February 17

7:00 a.m. Registration Opens

Breakfast on your own

8:00 a.m. Mingle with Exhibitors

Silent Auction Open

Gazebo II

8:30 a.m. THE ASPECTS OF HIRING AND FIRING

Grand Hall I

Moderator: Lisa Rackley, UGA Small Business Development Center, Macon, GA

Most agritourism operations do not have a full time human resources manager or legal team ready to tackle the issues that come with one of our most valued assets...employees. Participate in the discussion of how family farms need to legally go about hiring and firing seasonal, part-time and full-time employees. Do you need an employee handbook for your operation? Can you fight certain labor claims made by employees?

Employer Best Practices for Hiring and Firing

Racquel Robinson, GA Dept of Labor, Atlanta, GA

[Is an Employee Handbook Necessary for All Operations?](#)

Grant Greenwood, James-Bates-Brannan-Groover, LLP, Macon, GA

[How to Protect Your Farm and Your Employees](#)

Lisa Rackley, UGA Small Business Development Center, Macon, GA

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

10:30 a.m. Morning Break with Exhibitors

Gazebo II

11:00 a.m. [GEORGIA GROWN PROGRAM](#)

Grand Hall I

Moderator: Shelia Rice, Calhoun Produce, Ashburn, GA

The Georgia Department of Agriculture is more than cows, cooking and pesticide inspections. Through the Georgia Grown Marketing Program they can help you market your commodities, fund the research and promotions, protect you from taxes, and ensure your commercial kitchen is up to code. Find out about all the aspects of the Georgia Grown program YOU need to be involved in to be even more successful.

Agritourism Signage Program
Area Marketing Contacts
Food Safety & Cottage Food Industry

Jack Spruill, Georgia Department of Agriculture, Moultrie, GA

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

12:00 p.m. Lunch with Exhibitors

Gazebo II

1:00 p.m. [PROTECTING THE FAMILY FARM FROM THE ROUGE IN-LAW](#)

Grand Hall I

Moderator: Janice Hale, Hillcrest Orchards, Elijay, GA

Succession planning is very important...especially with family property(s). But what about the 'rouge' in-law that you never imagined your grandchild to be legally bound?! Hear how you can keep the family farm in the family and away from the outlawed in-laws.

Nowell Berreth, LLP, Alson & Bird, Atlanta, GA

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

2:00 p.m. [BEST IDEAS ROUND TABLE DISCUSSION](#)

Grand Hall I

Moderator: John Slemmer, Benivia, LLC, Roswell, GA

Join the conversation with other agritourism operators to learn from each other. This past Fall was a huge year for most Georgia agritourism venues. Be prepared to share or just listen to what operations did well, what they plan to change, and what they will never do again.

Discussion will be limited to the following categories:

2014 Fall Season Success
Weddings / Events
Field Trips / Educational Offerings
Marketing

3:00 p.m. Afternoon Break with Exhibitors

Gazebo II

3:30 p.m. [AN ENTIRE GOVERNMENTAL AGENCY DEDICATED TO TOURISM?](#)

Grand Hall I

Moderator: Drew Echols, Jaemor Farms, Alto, GA

Another great example of our tax dollars at work...but for something from which we can actually benefit! Learn about the tools and people available through the Tourism Division of the GA Dept of Economic Development.

ExploreGeorgia.org

Visitor Information Centers

Regional Tourism Project Managers

Bruce Green, Business Development Manager, Georgia Dept of Economic Development, Atlanta
Lori Hennesy, Tourism Project Manager – Magnolia Midlands, GA Dept of Economic Development, Douglas

Amanda Peacock, Tourism Project Manager – Plantation Trace, GA Dept of Economic Development, Valdosta

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

4:45 p.m. GAA Annual Membership Meeting

Grand Hall I

5:30 p.m. Reception with Exhibitors

Silent Auction Bid War

Brochure Swap

Gazebo II

6:30 p.m. Dinner

Rainwater Conference Center

Outdoor Veranda beside the Cyprus Pond

9:00 p.m. Hospitality Suite Open

Fairfield Inn & Suites

Wednesday, February 18

All activities occur at The Rainwater Conference Center, Valdosta, GA unless otherwise stated

7:00 a.m. Registration Opens

7:30 a.m. Breakfast with Exhibitors

Gazebo II

8:15 a.m. Silent Auction Closes – BID HIGH!

Gazebo II

8:30 a.m. MARKETING IN THE DIGITAL AGE

Grand Hall I

Moderator: Beth Oleson, Georgia Agritourism Association, LaGrange, GA

[Do You Run Your Marketing Schedule Or Does Your Schedule Run Your Marketing Efforts?](#)

Kyle Hensel, Univ of Georgia, Small Business Development Center, Savannah, GA
The word "just" is becoming the single most non-threatening word/idea consuming our time, and most people do not even recognize it. If you do not have a plan to market your agritourism operation, your day/week/month will run away with all the other effortless, time-robbing items to which you think, it's "just" a small task or "just" a quick errand. Take control of your marketing efforts with a plan for promoting your operation and "just" wait to see the return on your marketing time.

Going Beyond "The Post"

Guerry Norwood, Full Media, Gainesville, GA

Learn how to "Go Beyond the Post" and utilized all that social media has to offer from advanced Facebook practices to other forums such as Twitter, Pinterest, Instagram and more. Facebook got us into the social media frenzy but now there are other, more trending tools to help you reach new audiences, market your operation and special events.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

10:30 a.m. Morning Break with Exhibitors

SILENT AUCTION WINNERS POSTED

Gazebo II

10:45 a.m. Exhibitors Break Down

NAVIGATING THE INSURANCE LIABILITY MAZE

Grand Hall I

Moderator: Rita Douglas, Ottawa Farms, Pooler, GA

One of the most important and confusing questions in all agritourism looms around liability insurance. Do you have enough insurance? Do you have the right company? Do you need liability insurance for each activity or just the farm? Get answers from two perspectives – a seasoned agritourism operator and an insurance broker.

Jeff Manley, The Rock Ranch, The Rock, Georgia

Alison Bagwell Smith, Bagwell Insurance, Gainesville, GA

Noon *Drive Home Safely!*