



PLANNING GUIDE FOR SMALL BUSINESS CENTER - COOPERATIVE EXTENSION COLLABORATIONS



Agritourism and Business of Organic Certification



Purpose

Two of the trends in the local food movement is an increase in Agritourism and an increased demand for Certified Organic Products. In North Carolina, the latest US Agriculture Census reported a 138% increase from 2012 to 2017 in certified organic farms¹ , and a 54% increase in Agritourism farm income between the 2012 and 2017 Census ².

In 2018, the Economics Impact Team/ Local Food Program responded to agent demand for training in these areas, creating two courses for use in the field. The initial group of trainees suggested additional support in the business sections of the courses. The Local Economic Impact Team collaborated with SBC's and Cooperative Extension offices to team-teach the courses. Recommendations from those efforts and guidance can be found in this guide

Small Business Centers (SBCs) in North Carolina have a unique ability to help farmers and food businesses create viable business plans to increase their share of the local food market. This guide explains the benefits and steps to collaborating with SBC's to introduce the two courses, The Business of Agritourism and the Business of Organic Certification.



Benefits of Collaboration

Small Business Centers and Cooperative Extension offices can share resources, responsibilities and expand the target audience for courses.

Additional meeting/classroom spaces

Access to community college graphics arts departments

Expanded outreach to multiple contact lists, constant contact

Inclusion in Community College course catalogs and mailings

Expanded subject matter expert contact

Shared advertising expenses

Colleges can collaborate with SBC's to offer credit for courses.

Building relationships between Extension and SBC's; creating a seamless transition between business and technical advising for food and farming businesses

Collaborations in the classroom often lead to other collaboration opportunities in community building to support the local food economy.

Business planning tools/worksheets and resources for course use



Sorghum farmers from the Orange/Durham Program with LaShon Harley, SBC Director

“I really like that the small business center has the capacity and coordination for setting up webinars. To me, it was a great partnership and I would like to see us continue these efforts with additional topics/subjects.”

Extension Agent, Wake County

Sample Course Flyers

Supplement Farm Income, Inspire Public Appreciation for Agriculture

Are you looking for ways to supplement farm income?
Do you wish the public had a better understanding of agriculture and where their food comes from?

Agritourism may be solution to these concerns.

When: Monday and Wednesday Evenings,

October 1-24, 2018; 6:00-7:30 pm

Where: Sandhills Community College

Small Business Center & Dedman Center for Business Leadership
102 Van Dusen Hall

Find out if agritourism is right for you and your farm. The Small Business Center at Sandhills Community College and the Moore County Cooperative Extension are offering an eight session Agritourism Short Course.

- Learn how agritourism might benefit your overall agribusiness
- Learn about types of agritourism ventures
- Learn how to market an agritourism business
- Develop a sustainable agritourism business plan
- Learn legal and risk management requirements
- Discover available agribusiness resources



The Business of Organic Production

A webinar series by the Small Business Center Network and NC Cooperative Extension

To register: ncsbc.net

Melissa Bell
Center for Environmental Farming Systems, NC State

Jeanne Myers
Wake County Cooperative Extension

Emily Mueller
Wake County Cooperative Extension

Nathanial Bruce
Caswell County Agriculture and Natural Resources Extension Agent

Laura Lauffer
Center for Environmental Farming Systems, North Carolina Cooperative Extension

Introduction to Organic Certification; Finance, Regulations and the role of Organic Certification Agencies

Introduction to Organic Recordkeeping; The Key to a Successful Inspection

Using Budgets and Financial Planning

Marketing Your Organic Products: Be Creative and find your best markets!

Social Media & the Organic Market

PRESENTERS SEMINAR INFO

NC COOPERATIVE EXTENSION CEFS WAK

The Pitt Community College Small Business Center, the Center for Environmental Farming Systems, and the NC Cooperative Extension Service present

The Business of Organic Farming

We will be conducting 5 FREE, in-depth training sessions on what it means for a farm to be organically certified, how to obtain and maintain organic certification, the business planning of organic farm operations, as well as record-keeping and organic product pricing and marketing. Students who complete all five sessions will have access to an on-farm consultation with CEFS Farming Systems Specialist, Melissa Bell.

Planting the Seeds of Your Agritourism Business

Diversify the income to your existing farms by adding Agritourism to your operations.

Hosted by Durham Technical Community College's Small Business Center and Co-Sponsored with the Small Business Centers at Alamance and Piedmont Community Colleges with the Orange County Cooperative Extension, this FREE eight part series provides information and resources about Agritourism, potential activities, pricing, marketing and legal/regulatory issues leading to an Agritourism Business Plan to launch your new business venture!

You may attend the series in its entirety or just specific classes that are most applicable to your interest.

Attend all eight sessions and receive a Certificate of Completion

REGISTRATION IS NECESSARY: bit.ly/durhamtech-sbc

CLASS	Session	Instructor	Time
CLASS 1	Session 1 Introduction to Agritourism	Noah Ranells, Farmlink, North Carolina State University	March 11 6pm - 9pm
	Session 2 Is Agritourism Right for Me?	Tyrone Fisher, Director, Orange County Cooperative Extension	
CLASS 2	Session 3 Developing Your Agritourism Business Concept, Story and Brand	Marti Bumgarner, Extension Agent, Agriculture - Crops and Horticulture, Orange County Cooperative Extension and LaShon Harley, SBC Director, Durham Technical College	March 13 6pm - 9pm
	Session 4 How to Make Money in Your Agritourism Venture! Break Even Point, Cash Flow and Profit and Loss	Laura Lauffer, Extension Associate, Center for Environmental Farming Systems and Mike Lanier, Area Agent, Agribusiness, Orange County Cooperative Extension	
CLASS 3	Session 5 The Business of Agritourism: Connecting with Agritourism Business Resources	Orange County Extension Agent, Agriculture - Crops and Horticulture and LaShon Harley, SBC Director, Durham Technical Community College	March 18 6pm - 9pm
CLASS 4	Session 6 Agritourism: Legal Compliance and Risk Management	Guido Vandershoven, Department of Agricultural and Resource Economics, NC State University	March 20 6pm - 9pm
CLASS 5	Session 7 Marketing Your Agritourism Business	Annie Baggett, Agritourism Marketing Specialist, NC Department of Agriculture	March 25 6pm - 9pm
CLASS 6	Session 8 Planning and Launching The Agritourism Business	LaShon Harley, SBC Director, Durham Technical Community College	March 27 6pm - 9pm

LOCATION FOR ALL CLASSES:
Durham Technical Community College, Orange County Campus, 525 College Park Rd, Hillsborough, NC 27278

NC COOPERATIVE EXTENSION NC STATE UNIVERSITY SBCN ORANGE COUNTY NORTH CAROLINA

Certificates

The Durham Technical Community College Small Business Center developed this certificate recognizing participants who completed the full series!

The certificate can be signed by both the SBC and Extension representatives.

A certificate could also be created for the Organic Series



Certificate of Completion

is hereby granted to

Name Here

to certify that he/she has completed to satisfaction

Agritourism Series

Granted: April 7, 2019



name, title



Audience & Timing

The Agritourism training is targeted to existing farm operations seeking to diversify their operations. We are not promoting Agritourism not associated with an existing production agriculture operation.

The timing of the course will depend on your target audience. Saturday workshops in early spring, summer, or early fall will likely not attract many production farmers or growers who sell at a farmers' market. Most courses are typically held in the winter months, biweekly or weekly from January through March.

AGRITOURISM on working farms

Any activity carried out on a farm or ranch that allows members of the general public, for recreational, entertainment, or educational purposes, to view or enjoy rural activities, including farming, ranching, historic, cultural, harvest-your-own activities, or natural activities and attractions. An activity is an agritourism activity whether or not the participant paid to participate in the activity.

**GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
SESSION LAW 2005-236 | HOUSE BILL 329**

Madison County Cooperative Extension collaborated with AB Tech Small Business Center offering a six week evening series in January & February.

Orange County and the Durham Tech SBC offered classes on Monday and Wednesday nights in March

Audience & Timing

The Business of Organic training can be targeted to existing or new operations or even folks just considering starting a new farm.

The course does not cover the detailed production practices of organic but rather focuses on the administrative and regulatory requirements. Special attention is given to the unique marketing strategy attracting the organic consumer.

A focus can be added to meet the demand for organic egg, dairy, or livestock production. SBC's can help to assess if there is interest outside of the traditional agriculture sector. SBC's cater to entrepreneurs who are seeking to start new businesses. Entrepreneurs follow trends, as certified organic demand increases, innovators are stepping in to meet that market demand.



Wake Technical CC SBC collaborated with CEFS staff and Wake Extension to offer a five part webinar series in March, before day light saving time ended! . This on-line format allowed SBC's from across the state to participate!

Organic Certification allows a farm or processing facility to sell, label, and represent their products as organic. The organic brand provides consumers with more choices in the marketplace. The USDA protects consumer options by protecting the organic seal. Any organic operation violating the USDA organic regulations faces enforcement actions, which can include financial penalties or suspension/revocation of their organic certificate.- USDA

Agritourism Series

- **Module 1** Introduction, Definition, History and Trends in NC
- **Module 2** Agritourism Assessment. Personality, Infrastructure and Financial Readiness
- **Module 3** Forming your Plan, Mission, Elevator Speech, and Customer Profile.
- **Module 4** Pricing Structures and Financial Management. This is a great session for the SBC to lead.
- **Module 5** NC Agritourism Network. Potential for grants, outside funding and a supportive network of allies.
- **Module 6** Marketing Channels. Great to co-lead with Extension and the SBC. Tap the NCDA Agritourism director, plan ahead to get on her schedule!
- **Module 7** Risk and Legal Considerations. Tap the NCSU Ag Legal Department or the SBC can find a local business attorney
- **Module 8** Wrap up. Excellent time for the SBC director to walk through the business planning documents and next steps with the SBC as consultant.



While each module can be offered independently, each module follows up on previous topics and has assignments for the next session. Please keep these specific steps in mind especially if you are sharing moderator responsibilities

Accessing Course Materials

Course modules are located on the NC Cooperative Extension Local Food Portal- under the Agent Resources Tab. Here you will find separate course links. Each module includes a facilitators guide, power point presentations and in some cases course resources, worksheets and handouts.

Another excellent resource in the agent resource tab is a link to a video presentation for each module! Viewing the authors of the original modules will give agents and SBC directors a great resource in course preparation.

NC STATE EXTENSION



Agent Resources by Local Food Topic

- Agritourism
 - Agritourism Train the Trainer ** – For questions contact Becky Bowen, blbowen@ncsu.edu
 - [Videos of training – Playlist](#)
 - [Powerpoints](#) and other resources for training
- Business Planning
 - [Organic Business Planning](#) powerpoints and resources.

Organic Series

1. Introduction to Organic Certification- Covers the basics of the inspection and certification processes, soil management.

2. Record Keeping for Certified Organic Operations. Keeping track of purchases, production costs and harvests are required for your inspection.

3. Pricing Your Product – Developing Profitable Operations. The organic market offers differentiated pricing



4. Promoting Organic with Social Media Applications- The organic consumer presents unique social media opportunity

5. "Out of the Box" Farm Marketing. How to show your organic produce best at market and how to help customers find you.

The Organic series is unlike the Agritourism series as there are no assignments and there is no 'flow'. Each course can be offered as a stand alone course.

Courses have been offered both on-line and seated !

Planning Timeline

Three Months Ahead:

Team Meeting

Small Business Center Director and Extension staff meet to discuss training opportunities.

Discussion Topics/Decisions

- What programming makes sense for our community?
- Which of the courses can we complete with existing resources?
- Are there topics/modules the SBC can take on?
- Which sessions does Extension want to lead?
- Where will the course be held?

- What kinds of outreach will we conduct?
- Are there subject matter experts to engage now to get on their calendars?
- Recruit sponsors? (meals or snacks?)
- Consider this as a regional event and promote beyond one county
- Time of year? Dates? Evening classes? Saturdays in the winter?
- Course location- Extension office, Incubator kitchen classroom, Farmers market ?



Planning Timeline

Two Months Ahead

- Secure instructor and guest speakers
- Address Agritourism course flow, assuring connectivity between classes with homework and handouts.
- Secure a location for the event
- Open registration
- Create flyers, advertisements and postcards. Contact your local network to recruit attendees and share promotion. Places to advertise might include:
 - Farmers markets
 - Feed and Seeds Stores
 - Planning Department
 - Future Farmers of America Club
 - Cooperative Extension web page calendar listing-regionally not just one county !
 - NRCS
 - Tourism office
 - Local papers
 - Local radio shows
 - SBC website, College calendar
 - Workforce Development office
 - Unemployment office
 - Organic certification organizations



Planning Timeline



One Month Ahead:

- Secure all speakers
- Prepare handouts (in binders if you have them)
- Check on site logistics (entry, security, kitchen access, tables, chairs, plugs, A/V and projectors, computers for use, parking)
- Identify a local caterer or establish budget for break snacks (optional)
- Marketing and outreach continues: social media “push” ads, Twitter, Instagram
- As students register, assess their course interest areas
- Make sure your partner/allied organizations are also promoting! Tourism bureau, Chamber, NRCS, SWC etc

Planning Timeline



Two Weeks Ahead:

- Confirm speakers and speaker needs (photocopies, A/V)
- Confirm all details of the schedule with the instructor
- Continue to market!

One Week Ahead:

- Print all materials (including additional info page copies for those who may not bring them).
- Each agency must create separate sign in sheets. SBC's cannot share registration data due to privacy policies.
- Create each course agenda with speaker bio
- Check registration for a final head count
- If providing snacks purchase ahead
- Send final reminder email to all participants and include directions, parking information, and the agenda or schedule for the day.
- Share participant interest survey with instructor

Evaluation

- Create a course evaluation for each session and an evaluation for the entire course. There is an evaluation attached to each module. The SBC may have their own process, usually a post course online survey.
- As the course continues, ask students about their business planning progress, assessing the need for additional resources or course content that may easily be added to the current program agenda. Subject matter experts may be able to address their specific needs if given enough lead time.
- Course participants are encouraged to follow up with the SBC director and specific guest speakers to assist in moving their Agritourism business plan forward.
- Attendees interested in certified organic production can rely on Extension staff to lead them to the next step in their process. SBC staff can help them research funding opportunities such as NRCS cost share programs.



“This course was fantastic. I stayed for all eight sessions. I wish more people knew about this opportunity!
- Orange County Agritourism Participant

Thank you to our 2018-2019 Collaboration Partners!

Thank you to the following SBC Program Directors and Extension Offices for their guidance and participation in our new collaborative efforts

- Durham Technical Community College & Orange County Cooperative Extension
- Sandhills Community College & Moore County Cooperative Extension
- Asheville Buncombe Technical Community College & Madison County Cooperative Extension
- Pitt Community College & Pitt County Cooperative Extension
- Wake Technical Community College & Wake County Cooperative Extension & Center for Environmental Farming Systems Staff!



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www.cefs.ncsu.edu



More Information

This guide was created by Laura Lauffer with support from the Economic Impacts of Local Food and Agriculture Work Group , Local Foods Program Team

The primary purpose of the Local Food Program Team (LFPT) is to increase the overall capacity and competence of the organization by strengthening the link between campus and county regarding the development of a statewide Local Food Program.

The role of the Economic Impacts of Local Food and Agriculture Work Group is to facilitate regional economic development.

Contact Information

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The format of this resource guide was adapted from Planning Guide for Agripreneurship Small Business Centers developed by Emily Edmonds and Laura Lauffer for the North Carolina Growing Together Project

Endnote 1

https://www.nass.usda.gov/Publications/AgCensus/2017/Full_Report/Volume_1,_Chapter_1_State_Level/North_Carolina/st37_1_0051_0051.pdf

Endnote 2

<https://quickstats.nass.usda.gov/results/66385853-35A2-3E1C-8F27-4BE70BF33ABC>