

Office of the Commissioner of Agriculture  
**KENT A. LEONHARDT**



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**NEWS RELEASE**  
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### **AGRITOURISM INITIATIVE FOCUSES ON WEST VIRGINIA'S POTOMAC HIGHLANDS**

**Charleston, W.Va.** – Tourism and farming may not seem like a natural fit but the agritourism industry, any agriculture-based operation or activity that brings visitors to a farm, is booming across the country. The West Virginia Department of Agriculture (WVDA) and the West Virginia University Extension Service are teaming up to present *Agritourism Initiative – Potomac Highlands*, a training program aimed at helping West Virginia farmers create agritourism opportunities.

The five, day-long training sessions are aimed at farmers in the Potomac Highlands. Experts from agriculture, tourism and the business sector will focus on marketing, hospitality, management and business collaborations.

“West Virginia must promote our farms and agriculture businesses as tourist destinations. Our state is one of the most beautiful states in the nation and our farmers are some of the best I have known, so why not share it with the world,” said Commissioner of Agriculture Kent Leonhardt. “This is a great initiative and partnership to help foster job creation here in the Mountain State.”

From a farm wedding to a berry picking excursion for the family, an overnight stay at a working farm to a tour of a winery, agritourism covers a lot of ground and so will the program, making it a one-stop-shop to help farmers create their business, form key partnerships and get their message to the masses.

The WVDA and Extension Service will be working with Eastern WV Community and Technical College and the Hardy County Convention and Visitor Bureau. Those who successfully complete the course will be eligible for certification as a *West Virginia Agritourism Initiative Business*.

The courses will be held at Eastern WV Community and Technical College in Moorefield, WV. Space is limited and registration is on a first-come, first-serve basis. The registration deadline is February 22. The cost of the program is \$60 which includes class materials, meals and snacks.

The classes will be held on the following days:

March 4 8:30 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.  
March 14 5:30 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.  
March 28 5:30 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.  
April 11 5:30 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.  
April 22 8:30 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.

To register, call 304-434-8000 or log on to:

<https://events.r20.constantcontact.com/register/eventReg?oeidk=a07edqcgdxt1f5d15c6&oseq=&c=&ch=>

Distance learning opportunities are available. Please contact the number above for more information.

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