

**News Release**  
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**AGRITOURISM WORKSHOPS HELP OPERATORS PROFIT FROM ATTRACTIONS**

Agritourism operators can learn how to manage risk, take advantage of the educational value of their operations and become certified as a West Virginia Agritourism Initiative Business through a series of workshops being offered in Morgantown, Beaver and online.

Four day-long training sessions will be held at the WVU Agricultural Sciences Building in Morgantown on Nov. 1, Dec. 6, Jan. 10 and Feb. 7.

Residents in the southern part of the state can attend classes at the Emma Byrd Higher Education Center in Beaver. The class meets Nov. 8, Dec. 13, Jan. 17 and Feb. 14.

Participants can also work through online sessions at their own pace to complete the course between Jan. 15 and March 30.

A spring capstone trip to Raleigh, N.C., will be available to a limited number of participants who complete the course. Participants will be responsible for paying for their lodging and some meals. Transportation and admissions fees will be covered by grant funds.

The program is a collaboration between the West Virginia Department of Agriculture, WVU Extension Service, the West Virginia Division of Tourism and West Virginia State University.

“Even in a rural state such as West Virginia, most people are generations removed from the farm,” said Commissioner of Agriculture Walt Helmick. “Agritourism is an opportunity to help people – young and old – reconnect to the land and gain an appreciation for agriculture. At the same time, it can be a real plus when it comes to farm profitability.”

The classes are funded through a \$30,000 grant from the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s National Institute of Food and Agriculture. Organizers say the program will serve as a ‘one-stop-shop’ for agritourism resources, helping farmers navigate the risk management issues arising from agritourism activities. Participants who successfully complete the course requirements are eligible for certification as a West Virginia Agritourism Initiative Business.

Classes are limited to 20 participants and registration is available on a first-come, first-served basis. Cost of the entire course is \$40 and includes course materials, meals and snacks.

To register or learn more about the course, visit [anr.ext.wvu.edu/agritourism](http://anr.ext.wvu.edu/agritourism). The deadline to apply is Wed., Oct. 15.