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River Valley Extension News Release  
For Immediate Release  
John Forshee, Director

### NCK Agritourism Vacation Packages Soon to be Available

In a day and age when the average person in America has no direct connection to agriculture and where their food comes from the demand for agricultural vacation experiences is growing.

Twenty-nine agritourism business owners and prospective owners, travel and tourism professionals, small business consultants, and agritourism educators gathered at the LCL Buffalo Ranch and Museum near Clifton on Tuesday, June 7 to develop strategies to help facilitate the growth of agritourism in NC Kansas.

“People are willing to pay, and pay a premium, for a quality agritourism vacation experience,” said Jan Jantzen, owner of BoonDocks Initiatives LLC, an agritourism consulting firm based out of the Flint Hills and a successful agritourism provider. “As with any small business, customer service is the key to success in an agritourism enterprise,” said Jantzen. According to Jantzen, it is also critical to have a number of agritourism options available in a give area. “Folks aren’t likely to drive 250 miles to participate in my one activity. But, if they have a nice place to stay and a good meal and multiple options for activities that might have different appeal to the various members of the group then they are likely to drive to and stay in the area.” Jantzen made these comments during his presentations to the group on “Customer Service” and “Agritourism Packaging Options.”

After a tour of the museum and buffalo ranch participants broke up into groups with one group working on developing a vacation package based out of the Clyde area. Another group spent time just sharing ideas with each other from tips to starting up rural lodging, to improving catalogs, to internet marketing. “It works when we help each other out said Madonna Sorell from Lazy S Farms near Glasco. As an example, when groups tour Trish Remley’s Grassland Gardens west of Miltonvale they often come to my place for lunch. It helps both our businesses.” Assisting with these sessions were Jantzen; Linda Sutton, Consultant for the NCK SBDC; and Becki Rhoades, Agritourism Specialist with the KDWP.

Rhoades shared the support that Agritourism is receiving at the state level from Governor Sam Brownback and others. As part of the state level restructuring, Rhoades will be moving to the Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks with full-time responsibilities for Agritourism, promoting new business development and helping existing businesses grow.

The event was coordinated by John Forshee, Director of the River Valley Extension District and sponsored by the Kansas Crossroads RC&D and the Clyde Economic Development. The hosts for the event were Casey and Rebekah Amerin, and the LCL Buffalo Ranch and Museum, Clifton. The evening meal was provided by Amerin's along with Tom and Julie Erickson and meal entertainment was provided by Sonya Garwood, Kickin' Karaoke.

Although the bulk of the participants were from the Clay, Cloud, Republic and Washington County area folks did travel from as far away as Leavenworth, Hiawatha, and Plainville to learn more about providing agritoursim in Kansas.

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