

News Release – **For Immediate Use**

FROM: John Forshee, River Valley Extension District

Could Agritourism be our Next Cash Crop in NCK?

Eighteen North Central Kansas residents recently completed the Agritourism: Your Next Cash Crop? workshop held in Concordia.

The focus of the five-night workshop was to assist those who have been thinking about an agritourism, rural tourism, or nature-based business; those who have a business and are looking for ways to improve or expand; and those who wish to support rural tourism in north central Kansas.

Throughout the workshop participants worked to define their dreams, develop business plans and pursue means of financing the business. The group worked together to price their products and services and develop avenues of finding, reaching, and serving customers. Risk management is always a concern for any business and so the workshop assisted those attending in developing layers of protection and determining the best business entity type to fit their needs.

The featured presenter for the workshop was Jan Jantzen, Director of Rural Tourism Development for the Flint Hills Resource Conservation and Development Area. Jantzen shared experience and background on how local folks can utilize resources they already have to develop and agritourism business.

Linda Sutton from the North Central Kansas Small Business Development Center, shared her expertise on developing business plans, financial statements, and marketing.

Becki Rhoades, Kansas Development Commerce, Rural Development Division – Agricultural Marketing provided workshop participants with resources through the KDOC such as the Simply Kansas program.

As a result of this workshop ten participants registered as agritourism businesses with the KDOC, nine signed up to participate in the Simply Kansas program, and two new limited liability companies were formed.

The workshop was sponsored by the Kansas Crossroads Resource Conservation and Development Area, Inc and the North Central Kansas Small Business Development Center. Support was received from the Kansas Department of Commerce, OCCK, River Valley Extension District #4, and was funded in part through a Cooperative Agreement with the U.S. Small Business Administration and Rural Business Development Tax Credits administered by the Kansas Department of Commerce and as invested by the North Central Regional Planning Commission.